# THE STRUGGLE OF THE SELF

SHAYKH AL-HURR AL-AMILI

ENDORSED AND RECOMMENDED BY

GRAND AYATULLAH
SAYYID ALI AL-SISTANI

In the Name of Allah,
the Most Gracious,
the Most Merciful

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*Selected Hadiths and Brief Commentary of a Chapter from Wasail al-Shia of Shaykh al-Hurr al-Amili*

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Per testimonial of
Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani

I.M.A.M.

Imam Mahdi Association of Marjaeya

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# Acknowledgment

Dear Respected Readers,

It is important to bring to your attention that this book, *Jihad an-nafs* (Struggle with the Self), comprising volumes fifteen and sixteen of *Wasail al-Shia*, has been translated and presented in this form in accordance with the invaluable advice of His Eminence Grand Ayatullah Sayyid al-Sistani. He strongly encourages especially the youth to read this work, which was entrusted to us by Ayatullah Shaykh Ali al-Dihneen, along with the directive to translate and publish it.

Shaykh al-Dihneen is a distinguished Shia scholar who has studied under esteemed jurists, including the late Grand Ayatullah Sayyid al-Khoei, Sayyid Muhammad al-Rouhani, and Sayyid Ali al-Sistani. Several years ago, he visited the United States, and during his most recent visit, I.M.A.M. was honored to host and facilitate numerous community gatherings for him, including events specifically for youth on a national level.

I.M.A.M. is deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve the community and humanity at large. After a long journey of translation, editing, reviewing, and revising, we are pleased to finally publish this book. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to this project at various levels, from translation to publication.

Sayyid M. B. Kashmiri
Representative of the Jurist

# Translator's Comments

The printed version of this book contains hadiths from the book of *Wasail al-Shia* found in volumes fifteen and sixteen.

This work was arduous to translate as it forced the translator to delve deeply into understanding the subject matter and an examination of books of commentary including Mazandarani's commentary on *Al-kafi*, Allamah Tabatabai's commentary, or Ibn Abil-Hadid's commentary on *Nahj al-balagha*, and in some instances it also required the aid of qualified scholars.

# A Note from the Editorial Team

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On the other hand, In order to create a friendly and easy to read text, please note that all of the chains of transmission were removed from the selected reports mentioned in this text. In addition, sometimes language was slightly modified in order to create a digestible understanding of the hadith report.

# IMAM's Introduction

## Introduction

The term spirituality is laden with undertones, expressions, and many unique emotions. It is safe to say that it is not solely connected to religion or any faith tradition and that everyone seeks spirituality at some point in their lives. Nonetheless, for people of faith, God is a focal point in being a spiritual being. For those who are God-conscious, it is impossible to live life and to see realities if He is not present. Spirituality in a religious tradition speaks to the notion of how we can discipline ourselves to the extent that we find God or that we know God.

Imam Ali (p) states, "The first step of religion is to know Him."[1] Thus, the first step to "being spiritual" is to put forth an effort to know God and, in turn, to know ourselves. As the tradition attributed to the Prophet (pbuh&hp) advises us, "The one who knows themselves, knows their Lord."

The prerequisite to knowledge of our Lord is then to recognize ourselves. And when I know my place, I can embrace the realities of the Creator. For instance, when I see my limitations, recognize my dependence, and submit to the fact that I am always in a state of need, I can embrace the fact that God is not bound by limitations, is independent from me, and finally see Him to be the All-Sufficient, the All-Praiseworthy, the All-Omnipotent. As the Qur'an states, "O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of Allah, and Allah—He is the All-sufficient, the All-laudable."[2]

1. *Nahj al-balagha*, Sermon 1.
2. The Quran 35:15, Ali Quli Qarai translation.

The human being is bound with restrictions when it comes to time, space, life span, and ability to gain knowledge. We can only eat so much, sleep so much, or drink so much, and we even find ourselves restricted in our capacity to appreciate those things which are most enjoyable in life. But through realizing this, we can also testify that there is a God above us, to Whom we need to submit, even though we do not always have the motivation to do so.

## Spirituality 101

For most people, engaging with a term like spirituality is too overwhelming. We associate spirituality with metaphysics and sublimity, but if that is what God desires from human beings, we should not get caught up in semantics. Though the path may prove to be incredibly difficult, with diligence and caution on our part, and if we put forth the effort, God will help us reach Him.

That effort is something that should not change no matter the circumstance; it is important to stay the course and stick with the process. Life has ups and downs, days to remember and days to forget. The day-to-day grind is often the source of stress and anxiety, but it also has the potential to be the source of happiness and satisfaction. For most, our spirituality and connection to faith hinges on the vagaries of our day. In other words, humans often turn to God at the highest of highs and the lowest of lows. Certainly, God is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy, and we have confidence that turning ourselves to Him at those most critical moments of our lives will yield the best fruits in this life and the next. But our effort in this life is not only about God responding to our supplications, and the goal should not solely be about getting to paradise. In the words of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (a), "There are people who worship God to gain His favors; this is the worship of traders. There are others who worship Him to keep themselves free from His punishment; this is the worship of slaves. A few obey Him out of their sense of gratitude and obligation; this is

the worship of free and noble people."[3] The goal is to build a relationship with God because He is worthy of it, and we, as His creation, can find incredible contentment in that—we simply have not been exposed to the light of that beauty.

Most people have challenges keeping a sense of equilibrium with their spirituality and making a healthy diagnosis of their own souls. It is important to understand that this is not a problem that you alone have, but it is something which we all struggle with in terms of our spiritual progress. If we are not concerned with cultivating our hearts and souls, then we have failed to understand the big picture of creation. However, diagnosing the ailment is the first step to the bigger question—how do I reach the level of the beloved of the Beloved?

1. **The journey is going to be incredibly difficult.** No one said that fulfilling our responsibility to God was going to be easy, just like no one said college, marriage, or raising children was going to be easy. The greatest of His creations had unique challenges and obstacles that they had to face. And when we look at many personalities in Islamic history who achieved incredible spiritual success, we see that often they faced significant odds. In the early days, we saw people like Bilal, and as the centuries moved forward, we found examples like Hurr al-Riyahi. Our obstacles are different, but we need to put forth an effort and recognize that challenges are a reality.

2. **Do not give up.** Spirituality is much like exercising. When we decide to change our health, we alter our diet and start exercising, and many of us know just how challenging that is. The first day is difficult and sticking with the first weeks and months is incredibly challenging. But if we give up in the tough times of putting forth that effort, we miss all our potential success. Yet once eating healthy food and exercising regularly becomes customary, it is incredibly

3. *Bihar al-anwar*, vol. 41, p. 14.

difficult to go back. As with exercise, our souls need training. You cannot go to the gym, eat a salad, and overnight turn into an all-star athlete. It takes time and effort. The same is true for your spiritual dimensions; every effort we make is one step in a gruelling journey.

3. **We are going to slip and fall sometimes.** Part of the process is to sometimes fall and make mistakes. If we learn from our mistakes and turn back to Him, we must understand that there is progress. Remember, God says in the Qur'an, "Allah loves those who repent."[4]

4. **Keep Striving.** Collectively, we are climbing a mountain that is missing a summit, because the process does not end. You can never be content with where you are since there is always an opportunity to continue to grow and mature. So, let us keep striving and putting forth our best effort and pray that God accepts the little we have to offer.

4. The Holy Quran 2:222, Muhammad Sarwar translation.

# *Chapter 1*

## The Struggle of the Self: A Religious Obligation

God has created the human being with both a spiritual and physical dimension, and it is important to know we have a soul that accompanies our body. While people live for perhaps seventy years, it is the body that enters the grave and decays, while the soul continues to live on, transitioning from this corporeal existence into *barzakh*, and eventually to the accounting on the Day of Judgment resulting in either eternal punishment or eternal reward. Thus, it becomes of the utmost importance for us to remain focused and diligent in caring for and cultivating our souls.

[20208] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) narrates that the Prophet (pbuh&hp) sent a platoon [to war], and when they returned, he said to them, "Welcome to those who have completed the lesser struggle and still have to perform the greater struggle." Someone said, "O Messenger of Allah! What is the greater struggle?" He (pbuh&hp) said, "The struggle of the self."

[20210] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said to a man, "You are the healer of your own self, you have your diagnosis, you know how to be healthy, and you have the medication. Therefore, be mindful of how you take care of yourself."

[20214] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) narrates on the authority of his forefathers (pbut) in the Prophet's will to Ali, "O Ali! The best of struggles (*jihad*) is that one becomes such that they do not partake in oppressing people."

[20215] 8. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said. "Those who control themselves when they want, when they fear, when they desire, when they feel anger, and when they are pleased, Allah will not let their body enter hellfire."

[20217] 10. The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, "The true struggle is the one who struggles against the self [and its desires]."

# *Chapter 2*

## The Obligations of the Body's Limbs and Their Prescribed Responsibilities

Though we have been honored with the soul, our bodies are vessels that also have intrinsic responsibilities. And in Islamic tradition, there is an emphasis on ritual, like prayers and fasting, so that the physical toll on our body helps to mold the immaterial soul with which we have been created. Thus, through ritual, such as bowing and prostrating in prayers or abstaining from food and drink, we are fulfilling the body's responsibility and seeking the spiritual.

[20219] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Quran states, 'Indeed the hearing, the eyesight, and the heart—all of these are accountable.'"[5] The Imam explained, "One will be asked of the hearing what it heard, the eyesight what it saw, and the heart to what it became attached."

[20223] 6. Jamil ibn Darraj said, "I asked Imam al-Sadiq about faith to which he responded, 'To bear witness that there is no God except Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger (pbuh&hp).' I said, 'Is this not an action?' The Imam said, 'Yes.' I said, 'So, action is part of faith?' to which he responded, 'Of course, faith is not proven except with action and by acting according to one's faith.'"

[20224] 7. In the will of Imam Ali (p) to his son Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, he said, "Oh son! Do not speak of that which you do not know. In addition, do not say all that you do know. For Allah has decreed upon your limbs and senses obligations which He will hold

5. The Quran 17:36 (AQQ).

as proofs on them on the Day of Judgment and He will ask you about them, how they remembered Him, how they admonished, how cautious they were, their manners, and that He did not leave them without direction. For Allah states, 'Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed the hearing, the eyesight, and the heart—all of these are accountable.'[6] Allah also stated, 'When you were receiving it on your tongues and were mouthing something of which you had no knowledge, supposing it to be a light matter, while it was a grave [matter] with Allah.'[7] He then enslaved them through worship, where He says, 'Oh you who believe! Bow, prostrate, worship your Lord, and perform good deeds so you will be successful.' For this is an obligation that is inclusive of all limbs and senses."

6. The Quran 17:36 (AQQ).
7. The Quran 24:15 (AQQ).

# *Chapter 3*

## Obligations and Recommendations of What One Should Perform: *The Treatise of Rights* of Imam Zayn al-Abidin

The following come from the oft-quoted *Treatise of Rights* or *Risalat al-huquq* of Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p), who outlines the rights of our body parts, acts of worship, and others over us, in an eloquent, yet concise manner.

[20226] 1. From the Master of the Worshippers Ali ibn al-Husayn, Zayn al-Abidin (p) who said:

### The Right of God

"God's greatest right upon you is that you worship Him and that you do not ascribe any partner to Him. For if you do so, with sincerity, He will make it incumbent upon Himself to give you sufficiency in this world and in the hereafter."

### The Right of the Soul

"As for the right of your soul upon you, it is that you use it to obey Allah Almighty."

### The Right of the Tongue

"And the right of the tongue is that you consider it too noble for obscenity, accustom it to good, guide it to politeness, avoid

meddling that is useless, have it bear allegiance to people, and speak well of them."

### The Right of the Hearing

"As for the right of the hearing, it is to exalt it away from hearing backbiting and those things that are forbidden."

### The Right of the Eyesight

"The right of your vision is that you cast it away from seeing that which is impermissible, and that what you see through it is what you are admonished to heed."

### The Right of the Hands

"The rights of your hand(s) are that you do not extend them towards that which is forbidden to you."

### The Right of the Feet

"The right of your feet is that you do not use them to walk to something forbidden to you, for it is through them that you stand on the straight path. So, be mindful that they do not go astray and lead you into hellfire."

### The Right of the Stomach

"The right of your stomach is that you do not make it a container for the forbidden and that you do not overfill it."

### The Right of the Private Parts

"The right of your private parts is that you protect them from adultery and that you protect them from being seen."

## The Right of Prayer

"The right of prayer is that you know that it is an ascension to Allah Almighty, and in it you are in the presence of Allah. If you have knowledge of this, then you will stand in front of Him in restfulness and respect as His downtrodden, lowly, needy, wanting, fearful, impoverished, humbled, exalting worshipper. And its right is that you approach it [prayer] with presence of heart and perform it in accordance with its rules and rights."

## The Right of Hajj

"As for the right of Hajj [the pilgrimage to Mecca], it is to know that it is a visit to your Lord and an escape from your sins. In it is the acceptance of your repentance and the completion of the obligation that Allah has decreed for you."

## The Right of Fasting

"The right of fasting is that you know that it is a veil from hellfire that Allah has placed over your tongue, hearing, eyesight, stomach, and private parts. If you stop fasting, you will have torn Allah's protective covering away from yourself."[8]

## The Right of Charity

"The right of charity is that you know that it is your pride and deposit with your Lord that does not need a witness, which gives you more confidence to give in secret than in public. You know that it pushes away calamities and illnesses in this world and the hereafter."

8. Wording for last phrase of the sentence comes from Baqir Sharif al-Qarashi, *The Life of Imam Zayn al-Abidin*, (Qom: Ansariyan Publications, 2000), 500.

## The Right of the Sacrificial Lamb

"The right of the sacrificial lamb is that through it you seek Allah's pleasure and not the pleasure of His creations. What you should seek from it is that you want no more than exposure to His mercy and the salvation of your soul on the day that you meet Him [the Day of Judgment]."[9]

## The Right of the Ruler

"The right of the ruler is that you know that his temptation and trial is through you in those things over which he has authority. You should not upset him by disobeying his just commands and throwing yourself to your demise. In that case you would be his accomplice in the ill that would have befallen you."

## The Right of the Teacher

"The right of your teacher is to glorify them; to venerate their meetings; to listen to them carefully; to show interest in spending time with them; not to raise your voice to them; not to answer anyone who asks them a question until they answer; to speak to no one while you are in their gathering; not to backbite anyone in their gathering; to protect their image if anyone tries to say ill of them; to protect their weaknesses from being exposed and show their good traits; not to sit with their enemies; and not to take any of their allies as your enemies. If you do so, the angels of Allah will bear witness that you gave them their right, and that you learned their knowledge for the sake of nearness to Allah (swt) and not for people."

9. This is a metaphor for the Day of Judgment. It does not mean that the person will see Allah, because Allah cannot be seen. If He could be seen, then He would be limited and He (swt) is the Unlimited and Infinite.

## The Right of the Landlord

"The right of the landlord is to obey them except in that which displeases Allah Almighty. For there is no obedience to a creation in disobedience to Allah."

## The Right of the People

"The right of the people from their leadership (ruler) is that they became your people because of their weakness and your strength. Therefore, you must be just with them, you must be like a merciful father, you must forgive their ignorance, do not be hasty in punishing them, and thank Allah Almighty for the strength that he has given you over them."

## The Right of the Student

"The right of your students is that you know that Allah Almighty made you but an overseer over them in the knowledge that He has given you, and He has opened his chest [of knowledge] for you. For if you want to do well in teaching people, never act silly. If you do not show boredom with them, then Allah will give you more of His favor. However, if you prevent people from learning your knowledge or you act silly towards them when they ask for knowledge, then it is the right of Allah Almighty to take away the knowledge and its glory and to remove you from lofty status in their hearts."

## The Right of the Wife

"As for the right of the wife, it is that you know that Allah Almighty made her a comfort and companion for you. Know that that is a blessing from Allah Almighty for you. Therefore, you must be gracious and gentle towards her, even though your right upon her is more incumbent. For her right upon you is that you show her

mercy; since she must obey you, you must feed her and clothe her, and if she shows ignorance then forgive her."

## The Right of the Mother

"As for the right of your mother, it is to know that she carried you where no one carries anyone else [her womb]; that she gave you from the fruit of her heart that which no one gives anyone else [her blood]; that she protected you with all of her body parts; that she did not care whether she went hungry just to feed you, nor thirsty just to quench your thirst; that she would go without clothing as long as she clothed you; that she would stay up until the morning just looking over you; that she would abandon sleep for you; and that she would be cold and hot just to protect you from the elements. You will never be able to thank her except with the help and support of Allah."

## The Right of the Father

"The right of the father is to know that he is your origin, for without him you would not be. No matter what positive traits you see within yourself, know that your father is the origin of that blessing for you. So, praise Allah and thank Him [in good meansure], and there is no strength to do so without the help of Allah."

## The Right of the Child

"As for the right of your child from you, it is that you should know that they are of you and will be ascribed to you in this world due to their good and their evil deeds. You are responsible for that which you have passed down to them of good manners, their knowledge of their Lord Almighty, and for helping them to obey Him. Based on this knowledge, work on them knowing that you will be rewarded for treating them well and punished for not treating them well."

## The Right of the Brother

"The right of your brother is that you know that he is your hand, your might, and your strength. Take him not as a weapon with which to disobey God, nor as equipment with which to wrong God's creatures. Do not neglect to help him against his enemy or to give him good counsel. If he obeys God, well and good, but if not, you should honour God more than him. And there is no strength save in God."

## The Right of the Good-Doer

"The right of one who does good to you is that you thank them and remember their favor, that you speak well of them, that you are sincere in praying for them just between you and Allah Almighty. For if you do so, you will have thanked them in secret and in public. Then if you can reward them one day, you should do so."

## The Right of the Caller to Prayer (*al-Muadhdhin*)

"As for the right of the caller to prayer, it is to know that he is a reminder to you of your Lord Almighty, and that he is calling you towards good fortune. He is your aid in helping you fulfil your obligation to Allah Almighty. Therefore, show gratitude as you would show to someone who did good to you."

## The Right of the Leader of the Congregational Prayer

"As for the right of the leader of the congregational prayer, it is to know that he has taken on the ambassadorship between you and your Lord Almighty. He speaks on your behalf and not vice versa, he supplicated for you and not vice versa, and he protected you from the gravity of standing in front of Allah Almighty. For if there was a deficiency it would be in him not you, if there was perfection then you would share in that perfection, and he would not have favor

over you. He protected you with himself and your prayer with his prayer. You should, therefore, thank him for this."

## The Right of the Person Sitting Next to You

"As for the right of the person sitting next to you, it is to welcome them, to converse with them, and not to leave their side without asking their permission. As for the one who is sitting next to you, they are allowed to leave your side without seeking your permission. You should disregard their errors, remember their good deeds, and tell them that which is good."

## The Right of the Neighbour

"As for the right of your neighbor, it is to protect them in their absence, to be gracious to them in their presence, and to be their defender if they are oppressed. Do not keep track of their errors. If you find out anything bad about them unintentionally, then safeguard them. If you know that they will accept your advice, then advise them. Do not give them up in times of hardship, do not expose their errors, forgive their sins, and have a gracious coexistence with them. And there is no strength to do this without the support of Allah."

## The Right of the Companion

"As for the right of the companion, it is to befriend them in favor and in equity; to be gracious to them as they are to you; and do not let them beat you to a gracious act. If they do, reward them. Be kind to them as they are kind to you and prevent them from disobedience to Allah. Be a mercy to them, not a torture. And there is no power to fulfil such a right without the help of Allah."

## The Right of the Partner

"As for the right of the partner, it is that you take care of their affairs in their absence, that you care for them when they are present, that you do not make a decision without them, that you do not act on your opinion alone without taking theirs into consideration, that you safeguard their wealth, that you do not betray them regarding that which brings them status, and do not weaken their status. For Allah Almighty supports partners as long as they do not betray each other, and there is no power for either to achieve such a goal without the help of Allah."

## The Right of the Owner

"The right of the owner is that you seek their permission before taking from their wealth, that you only spend it on that to which they agree, that you are not saddened by those who do not praise you, and that you know that your work is in obedience to Allah. Do not be selfish, or else you will be regretful and there will be consequences to your actions. There is no strength for you to do this without the support of Allah."

## The Right of the Creditor

"The right of the creditor whom you owe is that when you can repay them you should. However, if you are unable to repay them, then you should please them with kind words and answer them with benevolence."

## The Right of the Associate

"The right of the associate is that you do not mislead them, cheat them, nor swindle them, and you should be God-conscious in dealing with their affairs."

## The Right of the Plaintiff

"If their claim against you is true, then you should be their witness against yourself. You should not oppress them, and you should give them their due right. However, if the claim against you is false, you should be kind to the plaintiff, you should not be inconsiderate of their claim, and you should not anger your Lord because of their claim. There is no power for one to do so without support from Allah."

## The Right of the Defendant

"If your claim is true, then their right is that you address them cordially, that you are fair in your claim, and that you do not deny them their rights. However, if your claim is false, then you should fear Allah Almighty, repent, and drop your claim."

## The Right of the Person Who Consults You

"Their right is that if you know that you can provide them with a good opinion,[10] then you do so. However, if you do not have the knowledge to guide them, then you should direct them to a person who does."

## The Right of the Person Whose Consultation You Seek

Their right from you is that you do not accuse them [hold them accountable] for those things in which they disagree with you. However, if they agree with you then you should thank Allah Almighty."

10. The translation of this phrase is from Imam Sajjad Ali ibn al-Hussain, *A Divine Perspective on Rights*, (Qom: Ansariyan Publications, 2002).

## The Right of the Person Who Seeks Your Advice

"You should give them advice and let your manner toward them show mercy and gentleness."

## The Right of the Advisor

"You should humble yourself and listen to them attentively. If they give you correct advice, then you should be thankful to Allah Almighty. However, if their advice is incorrect, then you should show them mercy. You should not accuse them of misguidance nor say that you know that they misguided you. You should not hold it against them unless they deserve it, in which case you should not heed their advice. There is no power to do so without the support of Allah."

## The Right of the Elderly

"Their right is that you respect them because of their old age, magnify them because of their priority in being Muslim before you, not be confrontational with them, nor try to beat them to a pathway or walk ahead of them. Do not treat them foolishly. If they treat you in such a manner, treat them with forbearance and graciousness, because of the right and sanctity of Islam."

## The Right of the Child

"The right of the child is that you treat them with mercy from the beginning when you first start teaching them. You should be forgiving, cover up their faults, be gentle with them, and be supportive of them."

## The Right of the Supervisor

"If they give, then accept from them with gratitude and acknowledge their favor to you. If they do not reward you, then accept their excuse."

## The Right of One Who Pleases You for the Sake of Allah

"The right of one who pleases you for the sake of Allah is that you thank Allah Almighty first, then thank them."

## The Right of One Who Mistreats You

"And it is the right of the one who has wronged you that you forgive them, even if you know that forgiveness will harm you if you seek revenge. Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, says, 'As for those who retaliate after being wronged, there is no blame upon them.' "[11]

## The Right of the People of Your Faith

"And truly, the people of your faith deserve that you harbor safety and mercy for them, that you be gentle with those who have wronged you and befriend them and reform them, and that you be grateful to those who have done good to you and refrain from harming them. And that you love for them what you love for yourself, and hate for them what you hate for yourself. And that their elders be like your father, their young men like your brothers, their elderly women like your mother, and the young ones like your children."

11. The Quran 42:41 (AQQ).

## The Right of the Disbelievers Who Do Not Harbor Animosity towards You

"You should accept from them that which Allah had accepted from them, and do not oppress them if they are loyal to their covenant with Allah."

# *Chapter 4*

## Recommendations for Maintaining and Practicing Good Manners

The believer must be good-mannered and act in a way in which there is always beauty and value emanating from them. The good manners and external etiquette we show to others is symbolic of the internal nature of our hearts and souls. Similarly, a failure to be good mannered shows an illness in our souls that requires diagnosis and a cure using obedience, forgiveness, and the like.

[20227] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) has said, "Surely Allah has favored his Messenger (pbuh&hp) with the most gracious of manners. Therefore, evaluate yourselves. For if it [the most gracious of manners] is in you, then thank Allah and ask Him to bestow more of it upon you." He then mentioned ten [of the most gracious manners]: certitude, contentment, patience, gratitude, forbearance, good manners, generosity, vigilance [*ghira*], courage, and virility.

[20228] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said to Ali (p): 'Oh Ali, I advise you to uphold certain characteristics in yourself.' He then said, 'Oh Allah help him! As for the first characteristic, it is truth; do not let a lie ever leave your mouth. The second is to be precautious; never try to betray. The third is fearing Allah as though you see Him. The fourth is to cry a great deal from fear of Allah Almighty; with every tear, a house in paradise will be your reward. The fifth is giving from your wealth and your blood to protect your religion. The sixth is to follow my sunnah (traditions) in prayers, fasting, and giving alms. As for the

prayer, it is to pray the fifty rakat. As for the fasting, it is to fast three days of the month: the first Thursday, the middle Wednesday, and the last Thursday. As for the giving of alms, give with significant effort so that people say about you, "He gives in excess" even though you did not. And pray the night prayer, and pray the night prayer, and pray the night prayer, and pray the zenith prayer.[12] Recite the Holy Quran in all states of being, raise your hands when in prayer, and turn your palms upwards to the sky. Brush your teeth with a siwak[13] before every prayer.[14] Maintain good manners and avoid bad manners. For if you do not, you will have no one to blame but yourself.'"

[20229] 3. Imam Jafar al-Sadiq (p) narrated from his forefathers the will of the Prophet (pbuh&hp) to Ali (p) when he said, "Oh Ali, there are three things that are the best manners in the world and the hereafter: that you forgive one who oppresses you, that you communicate with one who cuts off communication with you, and that you are patient with those who act with ignorance towards you."

[20235] 9. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "A believer should have eight traits: stability during calamities, patience during trials, thankfulness during ease, contentment with the bounties from Allah, not oppressing enemies, not begrudging friends, a tired body, and people are at ease because of them. Surely, knowledge is the companion of the believer, patience through anger is their vicegerent, the intellect is a prince [in control] of their soldiers [their

12. Dhuhr prayer, also known as noon prayer.

13. Wooden stick used to brush the teeth, used since the time of the Prophet (pbuh&hp).

14. According to the footnotes in the hand-written version, al-Tahdhib states, "before every ablution (wudu) and every prayer."

senses], being gentle is their brother, and obedience [15] is their father."

[20236] 10. Imam al-Sadiq (p) stated that Imam Ali (p) said, "Islam has four cornerstones: dependence upon Allah, submitting matters to the will of Allah, contentment in that which Allah ordains, and submission to the command of Allah, the Proud, the Majestic."

[20238] 12. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) said, "A believer listens to be safe from harm, speaks to gain reward, does not betray the trust of their friends, nor do they conceal his testimony from strangers, does not do good deeds for show, and remains humble if praised, they fear what is said and ask forgiveness from Allah for those things that others do not know about them. They are not taken in by the compliments of those who do not know them, and they fear counting their good deeds."

[20239] 13. Imam Musa al-Kadhim (p) said to his companion Hisham bin al-Hakam, "Oh Hisham! The Commander of the Faithful [Imam Ali] (p) used to say, 'There is nothing better than the intellect with which to worship Allah. The intellect of a person is not considered complete until it possesses many characteristics: they are safe-guarded from disbelief and evil, rationality and good are expected of them, the remainder of their wealth has been given to others [in philanthropy], they do not show favoritism in their words to others, their portion of this materialistic world is their daily sustenance, their thirst for knowledge is unquenched their entire life, suffering humiliation while with Allah is more beloved to them than glory with others, humility is more dear to them than credit, they greatly value the smallest favors from others, they belittle their greatest favors, they see all others as better than themselves and perceive themselves as the worst of people. That is the entire matter.'"

15. In another version, "leniency."

[20241] 15. Imam Ali (p) asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) about the character of a believer, to which he said, "There are twenty traits within a believer. If those traits do not exist in them, they will not complete their faith. O Ali! The ethics of a believer, are that they are present during prayer[16] that they hasten to give alms, that they feed the impoverished, that they wipe the head of the orphan [meaning they pay attention to them], they purify their clothes, and cover their waists [with an *izar*]. When spoken to, they do not lie. They keep their promises and when entrusted do not betray. When they speak, they are truthful. They are monks during the night and lions during the day. They fast during the day and are up worshipping Allah at night. They do not harm their neighbors. They walk on the earth with humility; they walk to the homes of widows and behind the caskets of the deceased. May Allah make you and us pious."

[20242] 16. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The followers of Ali (p) have empty stomachs, parched lips [from thirst], sympathy, knowledge, patience during anger, act like monks in worship [at night], then support themselves with good deeds in [this world] using caution and putting effort [into pleasing Allah]."

[20245] 19. Imam al-Baqir (p), quoting Imam Ali (p) said, "Our followers are those who compete in giving for the sake of allegiance to us, who love each other because of their affection for us, who visit each other to commemorate us, who when angered do not oppress, who when pleased do not squander, who are a blessing to their neighbors, and who are peaceful to those with whom they mingle."

[20248] 22. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Prophet (pbuh&hp) was asked about the best of worshippers, to which he replied, 'They are those who if they do well are optimistic, if they do ill repent, if they

16. He added in *Al-mahasin*, "and the pilgrims to the Holy House of Allah, and those who fast the month of Ramadan."

are rewarded are thankful, if they are tried are patient, and if they are angered are forgiving.'"

[20250] 24. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) said, "Surely the way to know the perfection of a Muslim's religion is that they do not speak of that which does not concern them, seldom show off, are forbearing in the face of that which angers them, are patient, and have good manners."

[20252] 26. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "A believer is one whose pleasure does not lead them to sin or evil; whose anger does not prevent them from speaking the truth; and whose authority does not lead to infringement on that which is not truly theirs."

[20254] 28. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Prophet said, 'Should I tell you of those who are most like me?' They said, 'Yes, oh Messenger of Allah.' He (pbuh&hp) said, 'They are the best of you in manners, the most lenient towards others, the most in touch with their relatives, the most loving towards their brothers in religion, the most patient in truth, the most able to hold their anger, the best of you in forgiveness, and the most fair during times of both pleasure and anger.'"

# *Chapter 5*

## Recommendations of Contemplating, Gaining Knowledge, and Applying It

A major theme of the Quran is reflection and contemplation of God's natural signs—the sun, moon, stars, oceans, and rivers. Through a recognition of these signs, we begin to humble ourselves in front of the Creator and appreciate the vastness of His blessings.

[20258] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Imam Ali used to say, 'Awaken your heart through contemplation, deprive yourself of some sleep, and be conscious of your Lord.'"

[20259] 2. Al-Hasan al-Sayqal said, "I asked Imam al-Sadiq (p) about people narrating that 'contemplation for an hour is better than worship through the night.' I asked, 'How do I contemplate?' He (p) said, 'That one passes by demolished buildings or a house and says, "Where are your residents? Where are your builders? Why is it that you do not respond?"'"

[20261] 4. Imam al-Rida (p) would say, "Worship is not excess prayer and fasting; it is no other than contemplation of Allah, the Proud, the Majestic."

[20262] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Contemplation invites obedience [to Allah] and acting on it."

[20263] 6. Harun Al-Rashid wrote to Imam Musa al-Kadhim (p), saying, "Admonish me and be concise." He (p) wrote back to him, "Everything that your eye can see is an admonishment."

# *Chapter 6*

## Recommendations for Having the Best Manners and Mention of a Few of Them

The personality and character of the Prophet and his family were so magnetic that they drew the masses to them even during socio-political circumstances that sought to isolate them from their respective communities. Our responsibility is also to be among those who extend our hands to others, are forgiving, patient, and consistently in a state of God-consciousness. Believers are those who are kind and lenient and do not let small interpersonal struggles impact and influence their ability to see life's big picture. And as shown from the following words of wisdom of the Prophet and his family, a good nature is just as important and significant as ritualistic acts of worship like prayer and fasting.

[20267] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "We love one who is rational, understanding, a jurist, forbearing when angry, mindful of others, patient, truthful, and loyal. Surely, Allah, the Proud, the Majestic has specifically given prophets the best manners. Therefore, whoever has such manners should thank Allah. As for whoever does not have such manners, they should humble themselves before Allah and ask that from Him." The narrator [of the hadith] said, "I give my life in sacrifice for you! And what are these manners?" The Imam said, "They are being precautious, content, patient, grateful, forbearing when angry, shy, generous, brave, protective, obedient, honest in speech, and to be ones who return that which has been entrusted to them."

[20269] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely Allah, the Proud, the Majestic, accepted Islam as a religion for you. Therefore, you should be good examples of it with generosity and good manners."

[20272] 6. Someone asked Imam al-Sadiq (p), "Oh son of the Messenger of Allah! Tell me about the best manners." He said, "Forgiving one who oppresses you, connecting with those who disconnect from you, giving to those who deprive you, and saying the truth even if it is against yourself."

[20273] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Let me tell you about the best manners: to forgive people, to console one's brother [in religion] with wealth, and to remember Allah plentifully."

[20274] 8. Imam al-Sadiq (p) has said, "Have the best manners, for Allah the Proud, the Lofty, loves them and you. As for bad deeds, Allah despises them. You must recite the Quran, and you must have good manners for they elevate the person who has them to the level of a person who is fasting and prays through the night. You must also be good to neighbors, for Allah commands it. You must brush your teeth, for it purifies and is a good sunnah. You must perform the obligatory prayers and avoid that which Allah has forbidden."

# *Chapter 7*

## The Obligation of Certitude about Allah in Matters of Wealth, Life-Expectancy, Benefit, and Harm

There is so little in life that is under human control. It is not only humbling when we reflect on the Creator's independence from us and our state of absolute dependence on Him, but it gives us the potential to truly understand our purpose as God's servants and slaves.

[20276] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) narrated on behalf of Imam Ali (p) who said, "Humans will not realize faith until they know that that which befell them was from no error of theirs; that which they were unable to attain was not theirs to attain; and that Allah, the Proud, the Lofty, is the only One who benefits and harms."

[20281] 6. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, Allah prefers a few deeds that are consistent and done with certitude to many deeds done without certitude."

[20285] 10. Imam Ali (p) narrated, "Death is a sufficient reason for one to be cautious and guarded about life's choices."

# *Chapter 8*

## The Obligation to Follow the Intellect and Contradict Ignorance

Perhaps, there is no gift that God has given humans that is greater than the gift of the intellect [*aql*]. Through the intellect, we can affirm God, His divine revelations, and be receptive to the teachings of the Prophet and his family. Thus, it is through this intellect that we worship, obey, and understand our Creator.

[20286] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "When Allah created the intellect, he gave it the ability to rationalize." Allah then said, 'By my pride and grandeur, I did not create a creation that is more beloved to me than you, nor have I completed you in anyone except those that I love. For surely, it is by you whom I command and by you that I punish, and by you that I reward.'"

[20287] 2. Imam Ali (p) said, "Gabriel (p) descended to Adam (p) and said, 'Oh Adam, surely, I received orders to make you choose between one of three. So, choose one and leave two.' Adam said to him, 'Oh Gabriel, and what are the three?' He said, 'Intellect, modesty, and religion.' Adam then said, 'Surely I choose the intellect,' Gabriel then said to modesty and religion, 'Go on your way and leave him.' They then said, 'Oh Gabriel, we have been ordered to stay with the intellect wherever it is.' He [Gabriel] said, 'As you please.' and he ascended."

[20289] 4. Imam al-Rida (p) said, "The friend of every person is their intellect, and their enemy is their ignorance."

[20292] 7. Imam Ali (p) said, "The intellect is a protective cover, and being knowledgeable is clear beauty. Therefore, cover the problems with your manners with your knowledge, and battle your desires with your intellect, [the result will be that people's] affection for you will remain and love for you will become clear."

[20294] 9. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Oh Ali! There is no poverty greater than ignorance and no wealth greater than the intellect."

# *Chapter 9*

## The Obligation of the Intellect to Defeat Desire

The ability of humans rests within their application of the intellect [*aql*]. If we stimulate this intellect and cultivate it by worship and obedience, we will receive success in this life and in the next. But if we allow the desires of this corporeal world to imprison our intellects, we will fall into the trap of discontentment in this world and eternal punishment. This extends to even the most basic distractions of this world, such as food, drink, sex, and sleep.

[20298] 2. Abdullah ibn Sinan said, "I asked Imam al-Sadiq (p), 'Are the angels better or the children of Adam?' He then said, 'The Commander of the Faithful Ali Ibn Abi Talib (p) said, "Surely, Allah placed intellect without desire in the angels, he placed desire without intellect within cattle, and he placed both within the children of Adam. Therefore, those whose intellect defeats their desire are better than the angels, and those whose desire defeats their intellect are worse than cattle."'"

In the above tradition we see the unique potential of humans to reach a height above that of the angels.

[20299] 3. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The tree of Tuba [in heaven] will be awarded to one who abandons current desire for a day that they have not yet seen."

[20300] 4. Imam Ali (p) said, "How many times has there been an hour spent in desire that caused prolonged sorrow!?"

[20301] 5. Imam Ali (p) said, "How many times has there been a meal eaten that has kept one from many other meals!?"

# *Chapter 10*

## The Obligation to Hold Steadfastly to Allah

It is important for us to consistently remind ourselves of our responsibility for service and submission to the Creator. When we remember our primordial state and our command to be an obedient slave, our wishes and desires should line up with that which God desires from us. Once we do that, we will see that God will support us in our efforts and admit us near to Him.

[20303] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Any worshipper who moves towards that which Allah, the Proud, the Majestic, loves, then Allah will move towards that which they love. Those who hold steadfastly to Allah, Allah will protect, and those whom Allah moves towards will never care if the sky falls on the earth. Or if it descended upon the inhabitants of the earth and became a trial for them. then because of their piety they would be of Allah's party. Does Allah not say, 'The happy end certainly belongs to the pious ones.'"[17]

[20304] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Allah the Proud, the Majestic, revealed to David, 'There is not one of My worshippers who chooses to hold steadfastly to Me above any of My creations, but that I would know it by their intention. Then the heavens, the earth, and all that is within them could be against them, except that I would give them a way out. And there is not one of My worshippers who seeks the help of one of My creations but that I would know it from their intention, and I would disconnect them from all heavenly aid, I

17. The Holy Quran 28:83 (MS).

would melt the earth from under them, and I would not care in which valley they would perish.'"

# *Chapter 11*

## The Obligation to Depend on Allah and Leave Things to Him

In our day-to-day dealings, it is often easy to delegate or entrust responsibilities to family members, colleagues, or members of our community, because we know that they will take care of the responsibility that we assign them. But oddly enough, entrusting our affairs to our Sustainer often poses a challenge.

[20307] 3. Imam al-Rida (p) was asked about the verse: "And whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him."[18] The Imam said, "Dependence upon Allah has levels. One is to depend upon Allah in all your affairs; then you will be content with anything that afflicts you, knowing that all good and benefit is from Him, and the final decree is [God's]. Therefore, depend upon Allah by placing those things in His hands, and trust in Him for all issues."

[20308] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who has been given three things will not be deprived of them. Those who supplicate will be given the answer, those who give thanks will be given more, and those who depend upon Allah will be given sufficiency." He then said, "Have you recited the book of Allah, the Proud, the Majestic? 'And whoever puts his trust in Allah, He will suffice him,'[19] He said,

18. The Quran 65:3 (AQQ).
19. The Quran 65:3 (AQQ).

'If you give thanks, I shall give you greater (favors),'[20] and He said, 'Pray to Me for I shall answer your prayers.'"[21]

As these traditions show, entrusting our affairs to God is a sign of a believer and shows that we keep a good opinion of the Almighty.

20. The Holy Quran 14:7 (MS).
21. The Holy Quran 40:60 (MS).

# *Chapter 12*

## The Impermissibility of Pleading to and Hoping for Anything from Anyone Other Than Allah

While many may disappoint us during our lives, it should be a consolation that Allah, out of His compassion and generosity for His creation, will never disappoint us. In return, it is important for us to seek help only from Him.

[20309] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely Allah, the Blessed, the Almighty states, 'By My Pride, Majesty, Glory, and Loftiness upon My throne! Surely, I will disconnect from those whose hopes are in anyone other than Me with despair, I will make them wear the garb of humiliation in front of people, I will turn them away from Me, and I will distance them from My favors. Do they [dare] place their hope during hardships in someone other than Me, when hardships are under my control? And do they [dare] plead from other than me or do their thoughts knock at the door of someone other than Me, when I have the keys to all locked doors, and My door is open to those who supplicate to me? Who is it that placed their hope in Me during a trial and was disappointed? Who is it that pleaded to me for something great and I did not respond to their pleas? I safeguarded the hopes of My worshippers and My safekeeping dissatisfied them! I filled My heavens with those who were not bored by exalting Me, and I commanded not to close the doors between My worshippers and Me, but they did not trust in what I said [about hope]. Do those who have been tried by My trials not know that no one except Me and those whom I have permitted can remove them? So, why is it that I see them distracted from Me? With My generosity I gave them things that they did not ask for, and then I took it from them, and they did not ask Me

to return it to them. Instead, they asked someone else. [Why do they do this?] If you see me give before you ask, do you think that when asked I would not answer? Does My worshipper make Me out to be greedy? Are not generosity and grace Mine? Is not forgiveness and mercy in My hand? Am I not the One with Whom you place your hopes, for who stops hope other than Me? Do hopers not fear placing their hopes in anyone other than Me? For if all the inhabitants of My heavens and My earth were to place their hopes in Me, and if I were to give each one of them the collective hopes of all the others, not even an atom's worth would be deficient from My kingdom, for how could a kingdom which I support be deficient? Despair will be for those who have given up on My mercy, and disparity will be for those who are disobedient to Me and are unmindful of Me.'"

It is important to note that this tradition does not reject the application or use of intercessors and intermediaries. Ultimate hope always should rest with God, but this does not mean we reject the tools and vessels at our disposal. For instance, while we supplicate to God for good health or for sufficient wealth, we still have an obligation to seek a doctor, take medicine, or actively look for a job for acceptance of our supplication.

[20310] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) explained the Quranic verse, "And most of them do not believe in Allah except without ascribing partners to Him."[22] He said, "It is when a man says, 'If it was not for this person, I would have perished; if it was not for this person, I would have been afflicted with this and that, and if it was not for this person my children would have been lost.' Do you not see that this person has associated a partner with Allah in His kingdom, giving him wealth and protecting him?" I said, "Then what should he say? If it were not for Allah blessing me with this person, I would have perished?'" He said, "Yes. There is no problem with saying that or something similar."

22. The Quran 12:106 (AQQ).

# *Chapter 13*

## The Obligation to Combine Fear and Hope and Work towards That to Which One Aspires and Fears

The believer is not a true believer until they are both in a state of hope for God's mercy and forgiveness coupled with a sense of fear of God's wrath and punishment. Though it may be challenging to reconcile, we must navigate this balance so as not to cling to God's mercy so much that we justify our sins and transgressions. At the same time, we should not feel as though we have so many sins that God will never forgive us.

[20311] 1. As part of a lengthier narration, Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There is no believing worshipper who does not have two lights [within them]: the light of fear [of Allah], and the light of hope [in Allah]. If this one [fear] was weighed, it would not be greater [in weight] than that one [hope], and if that one [hope] was weighed, it would not be greater [in weight] than this one [fear]."

[20315] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "A believer is not a believer until they are fearful and hopeful, and they cannot be fearful and hopeful until they are working [with their deeds] towards what they fear and hope."

[20316] 6. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "It was in Luqman's will to his son that he said, 'Oh son! Fear Allah a fear that if you were to bring him the obedience of the two weights [all of humans and jinn], you would [still] be fearful that Allah would torture you [in punishment]; and be hopeful of Allah the type of hope that if you were to come to Him

with sins that amount to the sins of the two weights, you would be hopeful that He would forgive you.'"

[20317] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Be hopeful of Allah with a hope that you would not dare be disobedient to Him, and be fearful of Allah with a fear that does not cause you to despair of His mercy."

# *Chapter 14*

## The Obligation to Fear Allah

As noted in the previous chapter, the believer should strike a balance between both hope for God's mercy and fear of His wrath. But fear of God is not only a fear of divine punishment. It also extends to a fear of our selves falling into such a state of transgression that we are not worthy of admission to paradise. We should always be vigilant over our minds and souls, so that we do not justify our transgressions or ever lose focus of the fact that we are the servants and slaves of God.

[20319] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) narrated from the Messenger (pbuh&hp), "Oh people! Surely, you have signs, so refer to them. And surely, you have an end, so refer to your end. Surely, a believer operates between two fears: between a life that has passed that they do not know what Allah will do about it and between a life remaining [to live] that they do not know what Allah has destined for them. Therefore, let the worshipping believer take from themselves for themselves, from their world for their hereafter, in youth before old-age, and in life before death. For [I swear] by He Who holds the life of Muhammad in His hands there is no one who can complain after this world ends, and there is no abode after it except heaven or hellfire."

[20320] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The believer exists between two fears: a sin that has passed that they do not know what Allah has done about it, and a life that remains that they do not know what perils they will gain from it. They do not wake up except in fear, and only fear will reform them."

[20322] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Those who fear Allah, Allah will make everything fear them, and those who do not fear Allah, Allah will make them fearful of everything."

[20324] 6. Imam al-Sadiq (p) narrated to Ishaq ibn Ammar, "Oh Ishaq! Fear Allah as though you see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you. If you believe that He does not see you, then you have disbelieved. And if you know that He sees you and you challenge Him with disobedience, then you have made Him the least important of any looking over you."

[20328] 10. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Those who when faced with a sin monitor themselves with the realization that Allah will see them [committing that sin] and are ashamed of the two angels that record their deeds, Allah Almighty will forgive them for all of their sins, even if they were as heavy as the two weights [all humans and jinn]."

[20330] 12. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Those things that give salvation are the fear of Allah in secret and in public, the intent [to please Allah] in wealth and poverty, and speaking justly during times of contentment and discontent."

# *Chapter 15*

## The Recommendation to Cry from the Fear of Allah

There are few actions which soften the heart in the way that weeping from the fear of God does. Shedding a tear is a demonstration of sincerity and good intention from the believer, particularly the tear that falls from the eye between the worshipper and their Lord in the darkness of the night, in a state of solitude, and away from any company. We should weep over our past sins and transgressions and because we are not in control of our final destination. Tears coupled with supplication and prayer have the potential to create a unique sense of nearness to the Lord of the worlds.

[20333] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) narrated from his fathers, on the authority of the Prophet (pbuh&hp) that he said, "Those whose eyes tear from the fear of Allah, for each tear Allah will give them a palace in heaven that is encrusted with diamonds and jewels. It will be the likes of which no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and which no human can imagine."

[20334] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One of the admonitions that Jesus (p), son of Mary, received from Allah was that He said, 'Oh Jesus! I am your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers,' and then He said, 'Oh Jesus, son of Mary, cry over yourself the tears of one who has bid his family farewell, has left the world to those infatuated by it, and his desires lie in that which Allah holds.'"

[20338] 6. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said [as part of a lengthier narration], 'A tear shed because of one's fear of Allah is priceless, for if you ask about the face of one who

sheds a tear out of fear of Allah, you will learn that they will never be tired nor belittled after that.'"

[20339] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Tuba (a tree in heaven) will be the reward of one toward whom Allah looks and sees them crying out of fear of Allah over a sin that they have committed of which no one else is aware."

[20340] 8. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Every eye will cry on the Day of Judgment except three: eyes that cried from the fear of Allah, eyes that cast themselves away from those things that Allah had forbidden, and eyes that stayed up late in the way of Allah."

[20343] 11. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Everything has a measure and a weight except tears. For one tear extinguishes seas of fire. If the eye became drenched with its own tears, then the face of such a person would not become tired by hardship or degradation."

[20344] 12. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "All eyes will weep on the Day of Judgment except an eye that cried from the fear of Allah. And for any eye that became drenched in its own tears from its fear of Allah Almighty, Allah would forbid hellfire from touching the rest of their body."

[20345] 13. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "There is not a tear that is more beloved to Allah Almighty than a tear that is shed in the darkness of the night out of one's fear of Allah and no other."

# *Chapter 16*

## The Obligation to Think Well of God and the Prohibition of Thinking Ill of Him

Our perceptions of God, due to our culture or upbringing, are often through the lens of fear with negative connotations. For many, their relationship with the Creator is uncomfortable and even, at times, intimidating. But when we reflect upon the traditions of the Prophet and his family, we see that they advise us to have a good opinion of God, remembering the blessings that He has afforded us, the supplications He has answered, and the hardships He has removed from us. As noted in earlier sections, we should be in a state of both hope for God's mercy and fear of His wrath, but not to the extent that we completely neglect the fact that His mercy precedes His wrath, as verses of the Quran say.

[20348] 1. Imam al-Rida (p) said, "Think well of Allah,[23] for Allah Almighty says, 'I am as my worshipper thinks of me. If he thinks well of Me then I am good, if he sees Me as evil then I am evil[24] to him.'"

[20349] 2. Imam al-Rida (p) said in a narration, "Think well of Allah, for Imam al-Sadiq (p) used to say, 'One who thinks well of Allah, Allah will be as they think of Him, and one who accepts [or is content with] the least wealth, Allah will accept from them the least deeds.'"

[20351] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Thinking well of Allah is that you beseech no one but Allah and that you fear nothing other than your own sins."

23. Give Him the benefit of the doubt.
24. According to a human perception of Allah.

[20352] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) would say "A believer must fear Allah as though they are about to enter hellfire, and they must beseech Him as though they are of the people of heaven." He then said, "Surely, Allah, the Blessed, the Almighty, is his worshippers' best thoughts of Him. If they think well of Him then good, and if they think ill of Him then ill."

[20354] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely the last worshipper will look back when being placed in hellfire. Allah will say, 'Hasten [to the hellfire].' When they bring that person forward, Allah will say, 'My worshipper, why did you look back?' The worshipper will respond, 'Oh Lord, I did not expect this of You.' Then Allah will say, 'What is it that you expected of Me?' to which the worshipper would reply, "I thought that You would forgive my sins and place me in Your heaven.' The Imam (p) said, "Allah Almighty then said 'My angels! By My pride, dominion, blessings, and loftiness, this person did not think well of Me even an hour of their life. If they thought well of Me for just an hour of their life, I would not have terrified them with hellfire. Permit[25] them their lie of their perception of Me and place them in heaven.' Imam al-Sadiq (p) then said, "Any worshipper who thinks well of Allah, Allah will live up to those expectations, and if one thinks ill of Him, then He will live up to those expectations, and that is what Allah Almighty meant when He said, 'Because of the [false] expectations you had of your Lord He threw you into hellfire, and so you became of the losers.'"

[20355] 8. Imam al-Rida (p) said, "He said to me, 'Think well of Allah. Surely Allah Almighty says, "I meet the expectations of my worshipper, for their expectations of Me are always good."'"

[20357] 9. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "On the Day of Judgment a worshipper who has oppressed himself is brought forward and Allah says, 'Did I not command you be obedient to Me? Did I not forbid you to be disobedient to Me?' The worshipper responds, 'Yes, O Lord! But

25. Here Allah is addressing the keepers of hellfire.

my desires got the better of me. So surely, if You torture me in accordance with my sins, You do not oppress me.' Then Allah will command to place that person in hellfire. The person will then say, 'I had the best expectations of You.' Allah [in response] will command that they be in heaven. Allah Almighty would then say, 'Your good thoughts of Me benefited you in this hour.'"

# *Chapter 17*

## The Recommendation to Belittle, Reprimand, and Show Great Discontentment with the Self

We must find a balance between holding ourselves accountable for our actions and self-deprivation. In other words, we should account for our souls often. How can we improve every day? What did I do wrong that I ought to reconcile for with my family members or at the workplace? Similarly, what good did I do today that I can perfect tomorrow? All of these are questions that stimulate a sense of purpose and accountability—all acts of virtue. At the same time, we should not reach a state where we are so hard on ourselves that whenever we sin, transgress, slip, or fall in our journey to seek God's pleasure that we do not get back on track. God has kept the door of His repentance open for us for a reason.

[20358] 2. Imam Ali (p) said, "Stop! Oh you whose desires imprison them. For those who move towards the world [and its desires] will not be scared away from it except by fear of death and resurrection. O people! Take charge of reprimanding yourselves and move [yourselves] away from the addictive nature of its habits."

[20359] 3. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "One who despises themselves without the scorn of people, Allah will give them immunity from the fear of the Day of Judgment."

# *Chapter 18*

## The Obligation of Obedience to Allah

Our primary and most essential responsibility is to be a servant of God. This responsibility is one of the purposes of our existence in this world, for He says, "I did not create the jinn and the humans except that they may worship Me."[26] Servanthood means obedience to God in all facets of our life. It is not limited to ritual acts of prayers or fasting, but to a consistent cognizance of and reflection on what God wants from us at every moment.

[20360] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Do not let the different sects take you in different directions, for, by Allah, our followers (Shia) are no other than those who are obedient to Allah Almighty."

Historically, many have said that the love of the Prophet and his family is sufficient for admission into paradise, without calling for any obedience and exertion on the part of a Muslim. However, the followers of the Holy Household (pbut) are those who show the obedience to God and piety they have learned from their teachers and guides, the Imams.

[20361] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) stated, "Surely the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Surely, one will not receive what Allah has to offer except through obedience [to Him].'"

[20363] 4. Imam al-Baqir (p) said in a tradition, "By Allah, we do not have absolution from hellfire, nor is there proximity between us and Allah, nor do we have proof over Allah, nor do we gain nearness to Allah except through obedience. For one of you who is obedient will benefit from our governance, and one who is disobedient to Allah

26 The Quran 51:56 (AQQ).

will not benefit from our governance. Woe unto you! Do not be deceived! Do not be deceived!"

[20367] 8. Imam Ali (p) said, "Surely Allah made obedience [itself] the reward of those who are righteous while those weak in faith remain deficient."

# *Chapter 19*

## The Obligation of Patience in One's Obedience to Allah and in the Face of Disobedience to Him

Undoubtedly, this transient world is a place of trial and tribulation, and we are even notified with what God will try us as He states, "We will surely test you with a measure of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth, lives, and fruits; and give good news to the patient."[27] The last part of this verse grants glad tidings to those who are reminded that the ups and downs of this life are temporary, and if we remain patient in this transient world, there is an opportunity for us to attain eternal pleasure in the next world.

[20369] 2. Imam Ali (p) said, "Patience is of two types: patience during a calamity is good and beautiful, but better than that is patience in steering away from what Allah has forbidden. Remembrance is of two types: remembering Allah Almighty during a calamity, and better than that is to remember Allah in the face of what Allah has forbidden, so that [partaking in sin] can be prevented."

[20370] 3. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "When Imam al-Sajjad (p) was near death, he hugged me close to his chest and said, 'Oh son! I will advise you with advice given to me by my father on his deathbed. Oh son! Be patient with the truth, even if it is bitter.'"

[20372] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Be patient in this world. For surely it is no more than an hour. For you will not find pain or

27. The Quran 2:155 (AQQ).

happiness in what has passed. As for the future, you do not know what it holds. There is no other than the present hour. Therefore, be patient in being obedient to Allah, and be patient so as not to be disobedient to Allah."

[20376] 9. Imam Ali (p) said, "Patience is of two types: patience for that which you love and patience for that which you hate." He (p) then said, "The ally of Muhammad is one who was obedient to Allah, even if unrelated [to the prophet], and the enemy of Muhammad is one who disobeyed Allah, even if the nearest of relatives [to the prophet]."

Nearness to the Messenger and his family rests solely on our deeds, actions, and intentions. In other words, if we cultivate our hearts and souls well, we are in the company of the infallible household.

[20377] 10. Imam Ali (p) said, "There is a huge difference between two deeds: a deed that its pleasure ends and its consequences remain, and a deed that its provisions end and its reward remains."

[20378] 11. And Imam Ali (p) said, "Be pious enough not to fall into disobedience of Allah in times of solitude, for the Witness [of your ill-doing] is [also] the Judge."

[20379] 12. And Imam Ali (p) said, "Surely Allah placed rewards for being obedient to Him and punishment for being disobedient to Him as a means of prevention of incurring His anger and as an encouragement to enter His heaven."

[20380] 13. And Imam Ali (p) said, "Beware that Allah sees you as you are disobeying Him or that He loses you when you should be obedient to Him. For, in that case, you will be among the losers. If you want to become strong then gain strength to become obedient to Allah, and if you become weakened then be weak in disobeying Allah."

# *Chapter 20*

## The Obligation of Piety

Piety is a sense of God-consciousness where we feel the presence of God at every moment of our lives. In our prayers, while with members of the family, while we are walking, or while at work, true worship of God rests in being always mindful of the Creator's presence.

[20383] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Imam Ali (p) used to say, 'A deed does not decrease in value when coupled with piety. For how can what [Allah] accepts decrease?'"

[20386] 4. Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn (p) said, "From the saying of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp), 'The best of provisions is piety.'"

[20387] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One whom Allah removes from the degradation of disobedience to the pride of piety, Allah will give them sufficiency without wealth, He will elevate their status without lineage, and He will entertain them without having an entertainer. And one who fears Allah, Allah will make everything fear them; and one who is not fearful of Allah, Allah will make them fearful of all things. And one who is pleased with little wealth from Allah, Allah will accept from them the least of deeds. And one who is not ashamed of working, then their provision lightens, and their family will be well-off. And one who is ascetic in this world, Allah will place wisdom in their heart; will make them speak it with their tongue; will make them see the flaws of the world, its ills, and its medicine; and He will remove them from this world safely to the peaceful abode [of heaven]."

[20390] 8. Imam Ali (p) said, "Have some piety even if it is little, and place a veil between you and Allah even if it is a light one."

# *Chapter 21*

## The Obligation of Precaution

Vigilance and self-accountability for our deeds and actions are among our most important responsibilities, for they cultivate a sense of awareness of our self and of the One whom we are meant to obey. If we lose sight of the road for a moment while driving a car, there is potential for disaster. Similarly, if we lose sight of our souls for a moment, the potential impact it has on us and those around us can be even more dangerous.

[20392] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "I advise you to have piety of Allah, to exercise precaution, to expend effort in what you do, and to know that surely that effort is useless without precaution."

[20394] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) admonished his companions, commanded them to practice asceticism, and then said, "Partake in precaution. For surely, that which Allah has will not be reached except through exercising precaution [in your affairs]."

[20397] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Have piety of Allah and protect your religion through precaution."

[20398] 8. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said in a narration, "Surely my companions are only those who have a heightened sense of precaution, work to please their creator, and ask for His reward."

[20400] 10. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Have piety of Allah, exercise precaution, expend effort, be truthful, be trustworthy, have good manners, be a good neighbor, call people to your way without your tongues, and be an adornment to us, not a disgrace. Prolong your bows and prostrations. For if one of you prolongs their bow or

prostration, Satan will call out from behind them, 'The hottest valley of Hell is my abode! They are obedient and I have been disobedient; they prostrated, and I did not.'"

[20401] 11. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said to one of his companions, "They are neither of us, nor is it a grace for one to be in a land with inhabitants of one hundred or more and have someone among them who is more precautious than they are."

The followers of the Holy Household have a responsibility to follow in the footsteps of their guides and be the most pious and God-conscious. There is an extra layer and burden of responsibility that we should carry on our shoulders, though not a layer of pride and arrogance, but rather of humility which should transform us in obedience and action.

[20403] 13. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Be of those who call people to their way without your tongues, so that they may see from you precaution [in deeds], effort [in worship], prayer, and good deeds. Surely, that is a calling."

[20406] 16. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "I heard him say, 'Allah does not [bless someone] give a believer both a sense of precaution and asceticism in the world without asking for heaven for them."

[20408] 18. Imam al-Sadiq (p) surely said, "One is not of our followers if they were in a land that had a hundred thousand and there was someone in that land who was more precautious [from falling into sin] than them."

[20409] 19. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "They are not of our followers (Shia) who say with their tongue that they are [of our followers] yet contradict our deeds and narrations. Rather, our followers (Shia) are those who agree with us with their tongues and their hearts, follow our narrations, and practice our deeds. Those are our followers (Shia)."

# *Chapter 22*

## The Obligation of Chastity

As mentioned earlier, God has created us with both a body and a soul. The body has natural, intrinsic desires, which, if not channelled in the right direction, can be detrimental to our souls. Among these natural desires are those for food, drink, sex, sleep, and power. And though such things may innately attract us, the struggle to pursue them in a legitimate manner is among the ways that God tries the descendants of Adam.

[20413] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There is no better worship in the eyes of Allah than chastity of the stomach and private parts."

[20414] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Surely, the best of worship is chastity of the stomach and the private parts."

[20416] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'The biggest reason for [some] of my nation going to hellfire are two vessels: the stomach and the private parts."

[20418] 6. By way of Abu Basir who said, "A man said to Imam al-Baqir (p), 'I am weak in deeds, little in fasting, but I try to only eat that which is permissible.' He said, 'He then said to him, "Which struggle is better than that of the chastity of the stomach and the private parts?"'

[20423] 11. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Those who refrain from harming their neighbors, Allah will remove their sins on the Day of Judgment. And those who have chaste stomach and private parts

will be royalty in heaven. And Allah will build a house in heaven for those who liberate a believer."

[20425] 13 Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely the followers (Shia) of Jafar are no other than those who are chaste in stomach and private parts, who expend great effort [to please Allah], who perform deeds to please their Creator, who ask for His rewards and fear His punishment. If you see these people, know that they are the followers (Shia) of Jafar."

# *Chapter 23*

## The Obligation to Avoid Prohibited Things

Guarding ourselves against the attractions of this transient world by staying away from the forbidden is our greatest responsibility. When we constantly reflect the fact that we are servants of God who must abide by His law, we are proving the true meaning of servanthood. We could stay away from disobedience to God due to our fear of His punishment or wrath, but we could also build a relationship with Him so that we do not disobey Him due to recognizing our humble state in front of our Lord and our hope to be the best of His servants and slaves.

[20427] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Every eye will cry on the Day of Judgment except three: an eye that stayed up late in the way of Allah, an eye that cried out of fear of Allah, and an eye that was cast away from that which Allah forbade."

[20428] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The harshest thing that Allah ordained for His creation is remembering Him plentifully." He then said, "I do not mean by this [merely saying] '*Subhan Allah wal-hamdu lillah wa la ilaha illa Allah wallahu akbar*,' although that is part of it. Rather, it is remembering Allah when faced with those things that Allah has allowed and has forbidden. If it were something that required obedience, they would do it, and if it were something that involved disobedience, they would refrain from it."

[20430] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'One who leaves the disobedience of Allah because of their fear of Allah Almighty, Allah will make them content on the Day of Judgment.'"

[20432] 6. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Allah Almighty says to the son of Adam, 'If your vision entices you to look at that which I have forbidden, then know that I have helped you to defeat it by giving you eyelids; close them and do not look. And if your tongue entices you to partake in that which I have forbidden, then know that I have given you support [against it] by giving you two lips; close them and do not speak. And if your private parts entice you to partake in that which I have forbidden, then know that I have given you support against it by giving you two lip-like formations; therefore, close them and do not partake in anything forbidden."

God has honored His creation and given us the ability to stay away from that which is forbidden, so we should feel a sense of pride in ourselves when we abstain from that which is forbidden and practice that which is an obligation.

[20434] 8. By way of Imam al-Rida (p) who narrated that his father (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'My nation will remain well if they exchange gifts, show love towards each other, honor trusts, avoid the forbidden, respect the guest, perform the prayers, and give alms. For if they did not do this, poverty and drought would try them.'"

[20436] 10. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Would you like me to inform you of the hardest obligation that Allah Almighty has decreed upon his creations?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Equity towards others, showing support to your brother [in Islam], and remembering Allah in all states. Surely, I am not referring to saying *subhanallah wal-hamdu lillah wa la ilaha illallah wallahu akbar* although it is partly that [to which I am referring]. Rather, it is remembering Allah in every state when faced with a situation of obedience or disobedience."

[20439] 13. By way of Imam al-Sadiq (p), by way of his fathers (pbut) that the Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, "Those who obey Allah have remembered Allah, even if their prayers, fasting, and Quranic recitation were little. As for those who disobey Allah, they have

forgotten Allah even if their prayers, fasting, and Quranic recitation are plentiful."

[20442] 16. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Those who uphold the obligations decreed by Allah, avoid that which Allah has forbidden, show true allegiance to the Holy Household (pbut), and absolve themselves from the enemies of Allah, then they may enter from any of the eight doors of heaven that they want."

[20443] 17. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) said, "Those who perform what Allah has made obligatory are the best of people, those who avoid what Allah has forbidden are the best worshippers [among all people], and those who are content with what Allah has given them [in wealth] are the wealthiest of people."

# *Chapter 24*

## The Obligation to Adhere to Our Obligations

We are bound by the obligations and prohibitions that God has commanded, because we are meant to be obedient servants. Our duty and responsibility are like the absolute bondage of a slave to their master. God has obligated us to perform prayers, fasting, charity, goodness to neighbors, and to care for the most vulnerable in our communities. Naturally, we must abide by these commandments of the Creator. The limits which God has set try us, and the most obedient in this world are successful in both this and the next world.

[20445] 1. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) said, "One who does the deeds that Allah decreed for them is the best of people."

[20446] 2. Someone asked Imam al-Sadiq (p) what Allah Almighty means when He says, "O you who have faith! Be patient, stand firm, and close [your] ranks."[28] He said, "Be patient when it comes to those things that Allah has made obligatory for you, be patient in the face of calamities, and unite around the Imams (pbut)."

[20448] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Allah Almighty said, 'My worshipper does not endear themselves to Me with anything more beloved than by doing that which I made obligatory for them.'"

28. The Quran 3:200 (AQQ).

[20450] 6. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Perform the obligations that Allah decreed for you, and you will be the most pious of people.'"

[20452] 8. Imam Ali (p) said, "Surely Allah has decreed obligatory acts for you; do not lose sight of them. And Allah placed boundaries for you; do not cross them. And Allah has forbidden [certain] things for you; do not defy those prohibitions. Allah has stayed silent about certain things—He did not do so out of forgetfulness; do not burden yourselves with those things."

# *Chapter 25*

## The Recommendation to Be Patient in All Affairs

Although we may spend a great deal of time in reflection, we are never truly privy to God's wisdom and decrees. Thus, the believer must be patient during life's trials and challenging experiences. A lack of patience and too much hope in something other than God's mercy will stunt the growth in our relationship with the Lord of the worlds.

[20455] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah said, 'A time will come when power cannot be attained without bloodshed,' and then he said, 'For one who lives in that time and is patient in the face of poverty even though they can be wealthy; is patient in the face of hatefulness even though they can make others love them; and is patient in the face of degradation even though they are capable of high status, then Allah will give them the reward of fifty apostles who believed in Him.'"

[20456] 3. Imam Ali (p) in his will to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah said, "Shake off oncoming worries with the drive of patience. Train yourself to be patient, for it is a great ethic. Use it against the calamities of the world and its worries that afflict you."

As the Commander of the Faithful notes in this tradition, we have a responsibility to train ourselves to be patient, a task which does not come easily but experience helps it. Hardships are intrinsic to humans, so there will be numerous opportunities for us to exercise our ability to be patient.

[20459] 6. Imam Ali (p) said, "Victory is not kept from a patient person, even if it takes a long time."

[20460] 7. And he (p) said, "He who is not saved by patience is killed by impatience."

[20462] 9. A woman came to Imam al-Sadiq (p) and said, "My son has left me to travel, his absence has been long, and I miss him. Please supplicate to Allah on my behalf [so that he returns expediently]." He then said to her, "Be patient." She took his advice, then she came back to him later and complained about her son's prolonged absence. He said to her, "Did I not tell you to be patient?!" She then said, "Oh son of the Messenger of Allah, for how long? For by Allah, my patience has ended." He said to her, "Return to your home and you will find that your son has returned from his travels." She indeed found that he had returned. So, she brought him to him [the Imam (p)] and said, "Is there revelation after the Prophet (pbuh&hp)?" [29] He said, "No, but when patience ends, salvation comes. When you said that your patience had ended, I knew that surely Allah had provided salvation for you by the return of your son."

29. Implying that Allah had revealed her son's return to the Imam (p).

# *Chapter 26*

## The Recommendation to Be Forbearing

In the Arabic language, there is a slight distinction between patience [*sabr*] and forbearance [*hilm*].[30] While patience is a general term, forbearance is a more specific form of patience coupled with self-restraint and intense self-control, particularly in times of immense difficulty or anger, as these traditions show.

[20464] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Ali ibn al-Husayn (p) used to say, 'I admire a person who when angry is saved by their forbearance.'"

[20465] 3. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Surely Allah loves the one who has a sense of shame, is forbearing, is chaste, and is sufficed [by Allah]."

[20468] 6. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Allah does not elevate someone's status if they are ignorant, nor does He ever degrade one who is forbearing.'"

[20471] 9. By way of Imam al-Sadiq (p), by way of his fathers (pbut), in the Prophet's final pieces of advice to Ali (p) he said, "Oh Ali! Should I tell you which one of you is most like me in manners?" He said, "Yes, Oh Messenger of Allah." He said, "The best of you in manners, the most forbearing of you, is the one who communicates most with their family and the one who is most equitable."

30. The term *hilm* is a special type of patience in the face of anger.

# *Chapter 27*

## The Recommendation of Leniency in One's Affairs

Although it may sound cliche, we should want in ourselves what we look for from our Creator. And among those things which we look for from Him is leniency and easiness in our accounting. Compassion and generosity with those around us, particularly our family members and children, are traits that we must cultivate within ourselves, and if we are lenient with those around us, God-willing, the Sustainer will be lenient when we need it.

[20478] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Surely, Allah is lenient and loves leniency, and He rewards for leniency what He does not give for violence."

[20479] 3. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Surely for everything there is a key[31] and the key to faith is leniency."

[20480] 4. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "One who has been given leniency has been given faith."

[20482] 6. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "If leniency was a creation, there would be no better creation of Allah."

[20492] 16. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who is lenient in their affairs will gain what they want from people."

31. The Arabic is *qufl*, translated as "lock."

# *Chapter 28*

## The Recommendation of Humility

We should remind ourselves of the utter and absolute dependence we have on Our Creator and His absolute independence from His creation. Through rituals like bowing and prostrating in prayer, we show our need for God. Humility also potentially keeps us from being prideful and arrogant in front of God and others. As we see from the narrations of the purified Household (pbut), humility goes beyond acts of worship (prayers, supplication) and is also a state in which we live and engage with others.

[20493] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "In the sky there are two angels assigned to the worshippers. They elevate [in status] those who humble themselves before Allah, and they demote in level those who are conceited."

[20494] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Allah Almighty said in what He revealed to David (p), "Oh David! Just as the closest of people to Allah are the humble, the farthest of people from Allah are the conceited."

[20497] 5. Imam al-Kadhim (p) said, "Humility is to give people that which you would love to be given."

[20498] 6. He said, "And in another tradition, he said, 'Humility has levels. One level is that a person knows their own value. As a result, they then lower their station within their own selves with a sound heart so that they do not want anything for others except what they want for themselves. If they see something bad, they push it away with a good deed, they restrain their anger, and they forgive people. Allah loves the good doers.'"

[20500] 8. By way of al-Hassan ibn al-Juhm who said, "I asked al-Rida (p), 'I give my life for you, what is the definition of dependence upon Allah?' He said to me, 'That you do not fear anyone other than Allah.' He said, "I said, 'What is the definition of humility?' He said, 'That you give people from yourself the same that you would love for them to give you.' I said, 'I would like to know your opinion of me.' He said, 'Look within yourself and see how often you think of me if you want to know your station with me.'"

In this conversation between the Imam and his companion, we see the levels of humility that we should have with God, with the creation, and with specific humility and respect for God's representatives—the Prophet and Imams of the Holy Progeny (pbut).

# *Chapter 29*

## The Recommendation of Humility with Renewed Blessings

One of the most important forms of showing humility is to offer gratitude. If someone were to present me with a gift, at the very least I should humble myself by thanking them in return. Similarly, when I recall God's blessings on me, it is vital for me to offer gratitude to Him.

[20502] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) quoted the conversation between Jafar ibn Abi Talib and al-Najashi, the king of Ethiopia, when al-Najashi said, "We find where Allah revealed to Jesus (p), "It is the right of God from his worshippers that they humble themselves to Him every time He gives them a blessing."

When word of this reached the Prophet (pbuh&hp), he said to his companions, "Surely charity increases the prosperity of the giver. Therefore, be charitable, and may Allah have mercy upon you. And surely humility increases the status of the person [who is humble]. Therefore, be humble and Allah will elevate your status. And surely forgiveness increases the glory of the person [who forgives]. Therefore, forgive and Allah will give you glory."

# *Chapter 30*

## Emphasizing the Recommendation to Show Humility to Scholars and Students of Knowledge

The believer has a responsibility to consistently look for knowledge to find truth, wherever it may be. Of course, this knowledge is that which draws us closer to knowing ourselves and, in turn, knowing God. This exclusive knowledge is that divine revelation contained in the Quran, the prophets, and the infallible progeny of the final Messenger (pbuh&hp). And through our efforts and humility in the presence of this divine knowledge, we are graced by the blessing of God, who says, "Allah will raise those of you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge in rank and Allah is well aware of what you do."[32] Due to knowledge being a gift from God for His most exclusive believers, it should be something for which we supplicate.

[20502] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Seek knowledge, and with it adorn yourselves with forbearance and poise. Humble yourselves to those you teach, humble yourselves to seek knowledge, and do not be authoritarian scholars lest falsehood be blurred into truth."

[20504] 2. Prophet Jesus (p) said to the apostles, "I need you to do something for me." They said, "Your need is fulfilled, oh spirit of Allah." He rose and washed their feet. They then said, "We should be the ones that should have performed this deed [for you]." He said, "Surely, the worthiest to be served is the scholar. Surely, I did not humble myself in this way except that you may humble yourselves

32. The Quran 58:11 (AQQ).

to people after me." Jesus then said, "With humility wisdom is not built with pride. That is why you see the grass grow in the flat plains and not on the mountains."

# *Chapter 31*

## Emphasizing the Recommendation of Humility in the Type of Food and Beverages That One Consumes

Stemming from the practice of the Prophet and his family (pbut), our religious tradition places significant emphasis on humility in all aspects of life, including consumption. The concept of moderation and gratitude for blessings is central to this ethos. As believers, we are encouraged to consume with mindfulness, recognizing that excess is discouraged. This approach not only fosters personal spiritual growth but also promotes social justice and compassion by preventing waste and ensuring resources are shared equitably. Ultimately, humble consumption aligns with the broader Islamic principle of being stewards of the Earth's resources, emphasizing responsibility and care for the environment.

[20506] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) described an event: "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) broke his fast on the eve of Thursday in the Quba Mosque, and he said, 'Is there anything to drink?' So, Aws ibn Khawli al-Ansari brought him a cup of buttermilk mixed with honey. When he put it to his mouth, he pushed it away and said, 'Two drinks, one of which is sufficient for its companion, I will neither drink it nor forbid it, but I humble myself to Allah, for whoever humbles themselves to Allah, Allah will raise them up, and whoever is arrogant, Allah will lower them down. Whoever is frugal in their living, Allah will provide for them, and whoever is extravagant, Allah will restrict them. Whoever remembers death more often, Allah will love them.'"

[20507] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Those who remember Allah plentifully, Allah will shade them in His heaven."

[20508] 4. Imam Ali (p) reported in *Nahj al-balagha*, "Contentment [with what one has been given] is unending wealth."

# *Chapter 32*

## The Obligation to Please Allah Instead of Following One's Sinful Desires

We are in a constant struggle between our bodies and souls. Our bodies are seeking the transient nature of the *dunya* (current world), while our souls are seeking contentment in God's remembrance. Through fulfilling God's commandments and drowning ourselves in reflection on His signs, we can prepare ourselves adequately for the spiritual battle that takes place within us. Often, our sinful desires seek to overcome us, and abstaining from indulging them and remembering God at that moment allows our souls to reign victorious.

[20509] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Surely Allah Almighty says, "By My Pride, Greatness, Loftiness, and High Status! If a worshipper chooses to follow My desire over their own, I will surely suffice them for their loss, the heavens and the earth will guarantee their wealth, and I will be the reason for any business that they gain from any merchant."

[20511] 3. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Allah Almighty says, "By My Pride, Majesty, Light, Loftiness, and High Status! If a worshipper chooses their desires over Mine, I will disrupt their affairs, I will confuse them in this world, I will busy their heart with it [this world], and I will not give them anything except that which I have regarded to be what they deserve. By My Pride, Majesty, Greatness, Light, Loftiness, and High Status! If a worshipper chooses to fulfil my desire over their own, then my angels will protect them, the heavens and the earth will guarantee their wealth, I will be the reason behind the business

they get from every merchant, and the world will come to them [not vice versa] tamed.'"""

[20512] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely Allah Almighty says, 'Surely, I do not accept all words of wisdom. However, if one's desire and worry is to please me, then I will make their worry sanctification and exaltation.'"

[20513] 5. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Combat your whim just as you combat your enemy."

[20515] 7. Imam Ali (p) said in one of his sermons, "Oh people! Surely there are two things I fear the most for you: following the whim and prolonged hope.[33] As for following the whim, [it is because] it prevents [seeing] the truth; and as for prolonged hope, it makes one forget the hereafter."

33. Prolonged hope that one will have time to do something, meaning procrastination.

# *Chapter 33*

## The Obligation to Contemplate Consequences before Acting

Preparation before pursuing any task in life will increase the possibility of success. If we prepare for any physical or mental exercise, we will come to know what to expect beforehand. Similarly, it is important to prepare and be vigilant over our deeds and actions, so we do not fall into the trap of sin and desire, Thinking before we speak, deciding in whose company we sit, and attending a particular social gathering are all day-to-day experiences that can potentially impact and influence our spiritual health.

[20516] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely a man came to the Prophet (pbuh&hp) and said to him, 'Oh Messenger of Allah, advise me.' He said to him, 'Will you follow my advice if I give it?' He repeated this question three times, and each time he would say it, the man would say, 'Yes, oh Messenger of Allah.' It was then that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said to him, 'In that case, I advise you that if you decide to do something, think about its consequences. If it is within guidance then go ahead with it, and if it is deviation then do not.'"

[20517] 2. Imam Ali (p) said in his will to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, "One who listens to different opinions will know where the mistakes lie. As for one who falls into predicaments without considering the consequences, they will face exposure to the worst of ordeals. Planning before action prevents you from regret, the intellectual is the one who learns from their experiences, and in experiences lie delayed [future] knowledge. It is through the changes of states [or time] that one will know the true essence of people."

[20218] 3. Imam Ali (p) surely said, "The tongue of a rational person is behind their heart, and the heart of an imbecile is behind their tongue."

[20519] 4. Imam Ali (p) said, "The heart of an imbecile is on their tongue and the tongue of a rational person is in their heart."

[20520] 5. "And he also (p) said, 'One who listens to different opinions will know where the faults lie.'"

# *Chapter 34*

## The Obligation to Be Equitable to Others Even If One Incurs a Loss

Establishing justice and creating a system of equity is a prophetic responsibility, which all of God's representatives have sought to show. In the Quran, God states, addressing the believers, "O you who have faith! Be maintainers of justice and witnesses for the sake of Allah, even if it should be against yourselves or [your] parents and near relatives, and whether it be [someone] rich or poor, for Allah has a greater right over them."[34] Sometimes, seeking to set things right will require a sacrifice on our part and may require us to give out of our wealth, our status, or our time. However, placing God in the equation allows us to receive His support and divine providence.

[20524] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'The master of all deeds is to give people of yourself, to support your brother in religion, and to remember Allah in all states.'"

[20525] 3. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Master of the Faithful, Imam Ali (p) said, 'Surely anyone who gives half of themselves to others, Allah will only elevate their status.'"

[20526] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Three of the closest creations to Allah on the Day of Judgment until He completes the accounting are a person who even though they could, in a state of anger, hurt those who worked for them, did not; a person who walked between two others and did not favor one over the other in the slightest; and a

34. The Quran 4:135 (AQQ).

person who said the truth both for what is their right and for what the rights of others from them are."

[20527] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "One who supports the impoverished from their own wealth and gives to people of themselves is the true believer."

[20529] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who guarantees me these four things, I will guarantee them four mansions in heaven: spend [on the needy] and do not fear poverty, spread peace in the world, abandon arguing even if you were right, and be equitable to others."

[20532] 10. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Should I tell you of the toughest obligation that Allah has decreed for his creations? It is to be equitable to people, to support brothers in religion, and to remember Allah in all states. If an opportunity for obedience comes their way, they take it, and if the opportunity for disobedience presents itself, they stay away from it."

[20533] 11. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Those who want Allah to place them in heaven need to improve their manners, be equitable, have mercy on the orphan, aid the weak, and humble themselves to Allah Who created them."

[20535] 13. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "One who supports the impoverished and is equitable with people is the true believer."

# *Chapter 35*

## The Obligation for the Believers to Love for Others What They Love for Themselves

Islamic tradition naturally emphasizes positive social interaction and centers that as a valuable tool allowing for our individual spiritual growth. And like other religious traditions, the maxim is that we should love for others what we love for ourselves. We see this same sentiment in the teachings of the Prophet and his family (pbut) given as a believer's foundational responsibility.

[20536] 1. A Bedouin came to the Prophet (pbuh&hp) and said, "Oh Messenger of Allah, teach me a deed that will earn me heaven." He said, "That which you would love for people to do unto you, do unto them; and that which you would hate for others to do unto you, do not do unto them."

[20537] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Allah revealed to Adam (p), 'I will summarize for you all that can be said in this matter in four phrases.' until he said, 'As for that which is in your relationships with people, it is that you accept for people that which you accept for yourself, and that you hate for them that which you hate for yourself.'"

# *Chapter 36*

## The Recommendation of Attentiveness to One's Own Faults Instead of Others'

As noted in earlier reports from the Prophet and Imams of the purified progeny (pbut), the believer is meant to consistently hold themselves accountable for deeds, actions, intentions, and even thoughts. This notion of self-accountability should never end, but rather it is a continual journey assessment to improve. If we compare our progress to God to others' progress and pass judgment on their behavior and actions, we should re-evaluate this behavior, for it is not an etiquette of a believer to pay attention to others' faults before examining their own.

[20538] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'If one possesses even one of these three characteristics, they will be under the shade of Allah's throne on the day when there will be no shade except that provided by Him:[35] someone who gave to people what they expected, someone who did not take a step forward or backward until they knew that it pleased Allah, and someone who did not find any fault to criticize in their brother in Islam until they removed that same fault from themselves. For surely as they remove one fault, they will uncover another, and that is enough to keep someone from criticizing others.'"

[20539] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "I heard Jabir ibn Abdullah al-Ansari say, 'Surely the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) passed by,

35. This metaphor expresses that having one or more of these three characteristics will protect a person on the day when only Allah (swt) protects anyone.

stopped, and greeted us. Then he said, "Why is it that I see that the love of the world has overcome so many people?" Then he said, "Paradise [*Tuba*] will be the reward of one who is too busy with their fear of Allah Almighty to fear people. Paradise [*Tuba*] will be the reward of one whose own deficiencies prevent them from looking at the deficiencies of their brothers in faith."""

[20540] 3. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "It is a considerable deficiency that one learns the deficiencies of people so much that they are blinded from seeing their own [deficiencies], that they mock someone for an inadequacy that is within themselves that they cannot change, or that they hurt their friend over that which does not concern them."

[20541] 4. By way of Abu Dharr, by way of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) in a hadith that states, "Abu Dharr said, 'I said, "Oh Prophet of Allah advise me." He said, "I advise you to have piety of Allah, for it is the most important of all things." I said, "Tell me more." He said, "You should recite the Quran and remember Allah abundantly." I said, "Tell me more." He said, "You should prolong your silence." I said, "Tell me more." He said, "Beware of laughing profusely." I said, "Tell me more." He said, "'You should love the impoverished[36] and sit with them." I said, "Tell me more." He said, "Tell the truth, even if it is bitter." I said, "Tell me more." He said, "As long as you are with Allah, do not fear the blame of others." I said, "Tell me more." He said, "Let what you know of yourself prevent you from criticizing people, and do not show anger towards them regarding those things that you do yourself." He then said, "It is enough of a disgrace for a person to have three characteristics: they know about people what they do not know of themselves, they are embarrassed for others about things with which they themselves are afflicted, and they hurt their companion with what does not concern them." He then said, "Oh Abu Dharr! There is no intellect like taking the time to understand, there is no precaution

36. The term used was miskin, which refers to someone who does not have enough money for the day.

like abstinence [from wrongdoing], and there is no lineage like good manners.""""

[20542] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely when Musa (p) wanted to leave al-Khidr, he said, 'Advise me.' From the advice that he gave: 'Beware of overstepping your boundaries [with others], walking aimlessly, or laughing without surprise.[37] Mention your mistakes and beware of looking at others' errors.'"

[20544] 7. Imam Ali (p) said, "One who looks at their own faults is too preoccupied to see others' [faults], one who is content with the sustenance given to them by Allah will never be sorrowful for opportunities that passed, and one who looks at others' faults and accepts them [as behaviors] for themselves is surely an imbecile."

[20545] 8. Imam Ali (p) said, "The greatest of faults is to find faults in others like those that are in you."

[20547] 10. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "In Medina there were people who had faults and they were silent about other people's sins. As a result, Allah kept others from divulging their sins and they died without faults in people's eyes. And there were people in Medina who had no sins, but they spoke of the faults of people. As a result, Allah showed faults in them for which they became known up until they died."

37. Meaning without a reason.

# *Chapter 37*

## The Obligation of Equity

Humans have an intrinsic responsibility to set things right and work toward putting just and equitable systems in place, in family and in community. Where historically we have seen dysfunction in society, the prophets of God were the foremost in rectifying communal challenges. Emphasizing the establishment of internal justice—by purification of the soul—and thereafter manifesting that justice in community is what we learn from the lives of God's representatives.

[20550] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Justice is sweeter than water to the thirsty. Demonstrate justice to the best of your ability, even if you are only able to demonstrate a little."

[20552] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely Allah gave one whom He has given dominion a lifespan composed of nights, days, years, and months. If they are fair with people, Allah will command the controller of the orbits of time to slow down time so that the days, nights, years, and months are prolonged. However, if they are tyrants to people and they are inequitable. then Allah will command the controller of the orbits of time to speed up time so that their nights, days, years, and months are shorter, even though Allah Almighty will have given them the same number of nights and months."[38]

38. Without detracting from the days and nights of their reign over their dominion.

[20553] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There are three closest creations to Allah Almighty on the Day of Judgment until He is finished with the accounting: one who when angered did not use their authority to hurt those under them, one who walked between two people and did not impose upon one over the other in performing a ritual, and one who said the truth about that which concerns them."

# *Chapter 38*

## The Impermissibility of Falsely Characterizing Someone as Just (or Unjust)

In Islamic law, there is a strong, severe penalty for false testimony, particularly characterizing an individual with qualities that do not apply to them. Although we should not expose others' flaws, pass judgment on others, or keep a bad opinion of them, it is just as important to speak honestly, especially when others may be affected.

[20554] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely the greatest in regret on the Day of Judgment is the one who characterizes another as just and then contradicts them with another person."

[20558] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said to a companion, "Tell our followers (Shia) that surely no one will receive the rewards Allah has in store for them except with deeds, and inform our followers (Shia) that surely the most regretful people on the Day of Judgment are those who have characterized someone as just and then contradicted him by following another."

# *Chapter 39*

## The Obligation to Self-Correct When the Soul Leans towards Evil

The battle with the soul is an ongoing struggle, and the most crucial time for war is when our souls seek to transgress God's boundaries. Our human makeup causes the distractions and vices of this world to draw us in, and the victorious person is the one who has channelled their soul away from any evil. God says in the Quran, "By the soul and Him who fashioned it, and inspired it with [discernment between] its virtues and vices: one who purifies it is felicitous, and one who betrays it fails."[39] Will we be amongst the felicitous? Are we preparing ourselves to remain focused and diligent during this lengthy battle?

[20560] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Cut yourself off from that which hurts your soul before it leaves you, and seek to release transgressions just as you seek your living, for your soul is held ransom by your deeds."

[20561] 3. By way of Imam al-Sadiq (p) who said, "The Master of the Faithful [Imam Ali] (p) said, 'When the jurists and the scholars would write to each other, they would write of three things after which there would be no need for a fourth: one whose motivation is the hereafter, Allah will suffice them over this world's worries; one who mends themselves internally, Allah will mend their external appearance to others; and one who mends what they perpetrated against Allah, Allah will mend what is between them and other people.'"

39. The Quran 91:7–10 (AQQ).

[20562] 4. Imam Ali (p) said, "One who mends what is between them and Allah, Allah will mend what is between them and other people; and one who mends the affairs of the hereafter, Allah will mend the affairs of their world for them."

[20563] 5. Imam Ali (p) said, "One who mends themselves internally, Allah will mend things for them externally; one who works for their religion, Allah will give them sufficiency in their world; and one who does well with that which is between them and Allah, Allah will suffice them in their relationships with people."

# *Chapter 40*

## The Obligation to Avoid Sins

In the journey of life, we remember our weak, feeble state before our all-merciful Creator. God has placed certain limits and boundaries, so we do not transgress them, and staying vigilant over our actions is among the most important steps we need to take to attain piety. These laws established by the ultimate Lawgiver [*al-Shari*] are not for His benefit, but rather for our development and self-growth. In other words, our ultimate success and the ability to reach our God-given potential starts with abstaining from those sins which He, in His might and glory, has told us to avoid.

[20565] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely there is not a vein that breaks, a calamity that strikes, a headache, nor a sickness except that the reason behind it is a sin, and that is proven by that which Allah states in His book, 'Whatever affliction that may visit you is because of what your hands have earned, and He excuses many [an offense].'"[40] He then said, "And Allah does not forgive for more than what has been perpetrated against Him."

[20569] 5. Imam al-Kadhim (p) said, "The Master of the Faithful, Imam Ali (p) said, 'Do not be so pleased about your deeds when you have perpetrated shameless acts that are worthy of exposure. And do not go to sleep at night thinking that you are secure from sudden death when you have perpetrated such sins.'"

40. The Quran 42:30 (AQQ).

[20570] 6. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Master of the Faithful, Imam Ali (p) would say, 'One who has committed sin should not expect to last through the night.'"

The Imam is trying to emphasize the importance of seeking forgiveness immediately after committing a sin. It is only because of the mercy and grace of God that He does not hold us accountable for every one of our transgressions at once, in the same way our parents or colleagues at work would. After sinning, it is important to fear God and have the motivation to plead for His forgiveness every night.

[20572] 8. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "My father used to say, 'There is nothing that corrupts the heart more than a sin. For the sin enters the heart and it stays within a person until it takes over and wreaks havoc within them.'"

[20573] 9. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Surely when a worshipper commits a sin, wealth moves away."

[20574] 10. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Sin deprives a worshipper of wealth."

[20576] 12. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "If a person sins, a black drop enters their heart. If they repent, it erases, and if they sin more, then it will increase until it takes over their heart after which they will never succeed."

[20577] 13. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Surely a worshipper asks Allah for something that they need, and it becomes up to Him to fulfil that need whether sooner or later. Then the worshipper sins one sin. Because of the sin, Allah then tells the angel, "Do not fulfil their request and deprive them, for they have angered, me and that is grounds for deprivation [from Me]."

[20578] 14. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, a person commits a sin and loses the reward of [performing] the night prayer. For the bad deed affects the sinner faster than the knife cuts through meat."

Our ability to perform good deeds, even if they are recommended actions, relies on divine support, and it starts with our effort to avoid sinning.

[20580] 16. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Every worshipper has a white drop in their heart. If they commit a sin, a black drop will form within the white drop. If they repent, that black drop will disappear. However, if they continue to sin, then the darkness will grow and cover all the whiteness. If it covers all the white in the heart, then they will never go back to being good, and that is what Allah Almighty means when He says, 'In fact their hearts are stained from their deeds.'"[41]

[20581] 17. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "My father used to say, 'Allah has decreed that He will not deprive a worshipper of a blessing until they commit a sin that warrants that deprivation.'"

[20584] 20. The Commander of the Faithful, Imam Ali (p) said, "There is nothing more painful to the hearts than sins, no fear greater than death; it is sufficient to contemplate what has past, and death is a sufficient admonisher."

[20585] 21. Imam al-Rida (p) said, "Whenever the worshippers commit a sin, as long as they are not working to mend them, Allah will create for them a trial the likes of which they do not know."

[20586] 22. By way of Imam al-Sadiq (p), by way of his father (p) who said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'He who commits a sin and laughs [about it] will enter hellfire weeping.'"

41. The Holy Quran 83:14 (MS).

# *Chapter 41*

## The Obligation to Avoid Disobedience

As mentioned earlier, it is only out of the mercy and compassion of our Lord that He postpones punishment and gives us the room, and often time, to seek forgiveness and repent to Him. The goal is not to avoid disobeying God because we fear Him, but rather obeying Him as a symbol of our love and appreciation for sustaining us in the way He does.

[20588] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Seek refuge in Allah from His attacks of the night and of the day." I said, "What are the attacks of Allah?" He said, "That He holds you responsible for your disobedience."

[20590] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely Allah Almighty sent a prophet amongst His prophets to his people and revealed unto him, 'Say to your people that, "There were not any people of a village who were obedient to Me who were in a state of happiness and as a result left doing that which I like for that which I despise, except that I changed their situation from that which they love to that which they hate. And there were not any people of a village who were disobedient to Me and were inflicted with hardship, and they left that which I despise for that which I love except that I changed their situation from that which they hate to that which they love," and say to them, "My mercy is faster reaching you than My anger. Therefore, do not disparage My mercy, for surely a sin that I forgive does not grow." And say to them, "They should not stand stubborn in the face of my anger, and they should not belittle my apostles, for surely when angered I can attack in a way that my creations cannot withstand."'"

[20591] 4. Imam al-Rida (p) said, "Allah revealed to one of the prophets, 'If you are obedient then I will be pleased, and if I am pleased then I will bestow my blessings, and there is no end to My blessings. However, if you are disobedient then I will be angry, and if I am angry then I will dispense my damnation, and My damnation will last seven generations.'"

God does not need to offer us any added favors for our obedience to Him, yet, out of His grace, He wants our success and not our failure. Why would we ever seek any Lord other than Him?

[20592] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Allah Almighty says, 'If one who knows Me disobeys Me, then I will place over him one who does not know Me.'"

[20593] 6. Imam al-Kadhim (p) said, "Every day and night Allah has a crier call out, 'Oh worshippers of Allah, be patient! Be patient not to fall into being disobedient to Allah. For if it were not for the grazing cattle, the nursing babies, and the bowing seniors [in worship] Allah would have brought down continuous torture on you, which would injure you greatly.'"

[20594] 7. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Allah Almighty said, "Any worshipper who is obedient to Me, I will not make them depend on anyone other than Me. And any worshipper who is disobedient to Me, I will make them depend on themselves and then I will not care in what valley they die."'"

[20597] 10. The Master of the Faithful, Imam Ali (p) said, "Even if Allah did not promise punishment for disobeying Him, it would have still been obligatory to obey Him as gratitude for His blessings."

[20599] 12. In speaking of some of the days of Eid, Imam Ali (p) said, "Surely it is only an Eid to only one whose fast was accepted by Allah,

whose prayers were thanked by Allah, and every day in which you do not disobey Allah is a day of Eid."

# *Chapter 42*

## The Obligation to Avoid Forbidden Desires and Pleasures

Transient pleasures linked to this physical world surround the human soul. The materialistic nature of objects and physical desires attract us but never truly satisfy us. We only seek to accumulate more, and consumption is one of the biggest ills of humans. But by remembering that such pleasures are only temporary and that the enjoyment of sin may only last a moment, we have the potential to find ultimate joy in remembering God and being near to Him.

[20600] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Hardship and patience surround paradise. One who endures hardships with patience in this world will enter paradise. And pleasures and desires surround hell; one who gives themselves over to its pleasures and desires will enter hell."

[20601] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Master of the Faithful [Imam Ali] (p) said, 'Avoiding a sin is easier than seeking repentance. How often has fulfilling a desire for an hour left one with long-standing sorrow, and has death exposed the reality of the world leaving those of intellect without happiness?'"

[20602] 3. By way of Imam al-Sadiq (p), by way of his fathers, by way of Ali (p) who said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Paradise [Tuba] will be the reward of one who forsakes a current desire for a day that they have not seen.'"

# *Chapter 43*

## The Obligation to Avoid Minor Sins

It is easy to downplay our transgressions and sins, deciding them to be minor and insignificant. But consistent sinning, no matter how minor we perceive it to be, does distance us from the mercy and compassion of our Lord. Rather than underestimating our sins, we should remember the might and the glory of the One to Whom we are disobedient. Similarly, we should not perceive the potential to do a good deed as minor, but rather embrace the opportunity to serve the Almighty.

[20603] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Be aware of Allah when it comes to small sins, for they are not forgiven." I said, "And what are small sins?" He said, "A man sins with one sin and then says, 'Paradise [*Tuba*] is my reward, if I had no sin other than that one [sin].'"

[20604] 2. Imam al-Kadhim (p) said, "Do not think that too much good is too much, nor that too little sin is little. For surely, little sins collect until they become many. And fear Allah when you are alone such that you would give half of yourselves [in dedication to Allah]."

[20605] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) came to a barren land and said to his companions, 'Bring some wood.' They said, 'Oh Messenger of Allah! We are in a barren land that has no wood.' He (pbuh&hp) then said, 'Let each of you bring whatever he can find.' They each brought back whatever they could find and threw it in front of him in a pile. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) then said, 'Just like that do sins collect." He then said, 'Beware of the sins that one minimizes, for surely for everything there is a seeker, and surely its seeker [of those sins] will

write, "the deeds of human beings and their consequences (of continual effects). We keep everything recorded in an illustrious Book."""[42]

[20607] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Imam Ali (p) said, 'That which benefits on the Day of Judgment should not be belittled [in this world], and that which harms on the Day of Judgment should not be belittled [in this world]. Therefore, deal with that of which Allah has informed you, as one who has witnessed it.'"[43]

[20608] 6. Imam Ali (p) said, "The gravest of sins are those that are minimized by their owner."

[20610] 8. By way of Imam al-Sadiq (p) by way of his fathers (pbut), the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Do not minimize anything associated with evil, even if it seems insignificant in your eyes. And do not think any type of good deed is excessive, even if it is exorbitant in your eyes. For surely, there is no good deed that is too big to help you seek repentance, neither is there anything that stays small when perpetrated with persistence [as it will accumulate]."

[206015] 13. The Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, "Do not think about how small the sin, rather consider against Whom you perpetrated it."

42. The Holy Quran 36:12 (MS).

43. Allah has warned us of the grave consequences of sin—torture and hell in the hereafter. According to the Imam (p), we should not belittle Allah's forewarning as if it was something that may or may not be true or as mythology. Instead, he tells us that our relationship with Allah's words should be with the certitude of one who has seen them, because they come from the All Perfect, All Knowing, Creator of all. Therefore, it must undoubtedly be the truth.

# *Chapter 44*

## The Prohibition of Disbelieving in Allah's Blessings

One of the most incredible features of our Lord is the fact that He has surrounded us with His blessings and has promised to continue to increase those blessings if we stay grateful to Him. It is stated in the Quran, "And when your Lord proclaimed, 'If you are grateful, I will surely enhance you [in blessing]'"[44] Remember, God does not need to surround us with the blessings of life, health, wealth, family, or status; instead He wants us and commands us to be grateful to Him. On the other side, He has warned us against disbelieving in His blessings as He says, "but if you are ungrateful, My punishment is indeed severe."[45]

[20617] 1. Someone asked Imam al-Sadiq (p) about when Allah Almighty said, "'Our Lord! Make the stages between our journeys far apart,' and they wronged themselves."[46] He said, "Those were a people who had villages that were interconnected. One village would look onto the other, with flowing rivers and apparent wealth. They then disbelieved in the blessings of Allah and changed what was within themselves concerning Allah's favors. As a result, Allah removed from them the blessings that He had bestowed upon them, and surely Allah does not change a people until they change what is within themselves. Allah brought down many rainstorms, flooding their villages and destroying their lands, He did away with their

44. The Quran 14:7 (AQQ).
45. The Quran 14:7 (AQQ).
46. The Quran 34:19 (AQQ).

wealth, and He replaced their gardens with two plots full of thorn trees carrying bitter fruits and some buckthorn trees." He then said, "We requited them with that for their ingratitude. Do We requite [so] anyone except ingrates?"[47]

[20618] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "It is written in the Torah: Thank one who gives you bounties and give to one who thanks you. For bounties last if you show gratitude, and they do not last if you disbelieve. Gratitude increases bounties and [offers] security from others."

47. The Quran 34:17 (AQQ).

# *Chapter 45*

## The Obligation to Avoid Major Sins

To commit a sin is a failure to fulfil our responsibility for service to God, and it is not that we should separate our sins into minor or major but instead recognize the imprint they make on our souls, as numerous traditions of the Prophet and his family demonstrate. There are, without a doubt, some acts of transgression that are weightier in severity in God's eyes. However, from our perspective, as slaves and servants of God, it is important for us to see every act of disobedience as severe and deserving of accountability.

[20619] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said about the verse, "Whoever is given wisdom, certainly, has received much good,"[48] "Knowing the Imam and avoiding the greater sins which Allah made punishable with hellfire."

[20620] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) explained that which Allah Almighty said, "If you avoid the major sins that you are forbidden, We will absolve you of your misdeeds, and admit you to a noble abode."[49] He said, "The greater sins are those for which Allah Almighty made hellfire obligatory."

[20621] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Imam Ali (p) said, 'Every worshipper owns forty heavens until he perpetrates forty greater sins. If he commits forty greater sins, then he will lose all forty.'"

48. The Holy Quran 2:269 (MS).
49. The Quran 4:31 (AQQ).

[20624] 6. Imam al-Baqir (p) was asked about the greater sins, and he said, "It is all those for which Allah promised hellfire."

[20626] 8. Imam al-Rida (p) said, "One who believes in monotheism and denounces the idea that there is anyone like Him," until he said, "and believes in the resurrection with certitude and avoids the greater prohibitions, then they are a true believer and they are from our followers—the Holy Household."

Embracing these theological positions is fundamental to one's belief and the foremost step we must take, and the idea is also to translate such faith and belief into action.

# *Chapter 46*

## Defining the Major Sins to Avoid

As believers, we have a responsibility to obey our Creator and Sustainer in every step of our existence. God has made within us the innate nature to recognize good from evil, with particular clarity surrounding many of the major sins, which are naturally forbidden to us. If we are persuaded to perform such vile acts of sin, it is due to a lack of care and attentiveness to our spiritual nature and to the soul, which we should spend our lives molding and fashioning, for the Almighty reminds us, "one who purifies it is felicitous, and one who betrays it fails."[50]

[20628] 1. By way of Ibn Mahbub, who said, "Some of our companions and I wrote to Imam al-Kadhim (p) asking him to tell us how many greater sins there were and what they were. He wrote back, 'The greater sins are those for which Allah promised hellfire. One who avoids them will receive forgiveness for all their sins if they were a believer. The seven greater prohibitions are killing a soul whose killing is prohibited, disobedience to one's parents, usury, losing one's beliefs after migration, accusing a chaste woman of adultery, embezzling the wealth of an orphan, and fleeing from serving in a *jihad*.'"

[206230] 3. Al-Asbagh ibn Nubatah, said, "A man came to Imam Ali (p) and said, 'Oh Commander of the Faithful! There are people that claimed that a worshipper does not perform adultery while a believer, nor steal while a believer, nor drink wine while a believer, nor eat from usury while a believer, nor shed bled that has been prohibited while a believer.' Imam Ali (p) then said, 'You are correct!

50. The Quran 91:9–10 (AQQ).

I heard the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) say, "And the evidence is the book of Allah," and he mentioned the hadith until he said, "So when they touch it, their faith decreases and they separate from it. So, they do not return to their faith until they repent. So, if they repent, Allah will forgive them. And if they return to the sin, Allah will enter them into hellfire."

[206231] 4. Ubayd ibn Zurarah said, "I asked Imam al-Sadiq (p) about the greater sins." He said, 'They are mentioned in the book of Ali (p) as seven: disbelief in Allah, murder, disobedience to one's parents, eating usury after one knows of it, embezzling the wealth of an orphan in oppression, fleeing Islamic war, and losing one's faith after migration.' I then said, 'These are the greatest of sins?' He said, 'Yes.' I said, 'Is embezzling one dirham from the wealth of an orphan in oppression a greater sin than abandoning [the obligatory] prayer?' He said, 'Abandoning prayer.' I said, 'You did not mention abandoning the prayer as one of the greater sins.' He said, 'What was the first thing that I told you?' I said, 'Disbelief.' He said, 'Surely one who abandons prayer without a justifiable cause is a disbeliever.'"

[20635] 8. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "And it was narrated that the greatest of the greater sins is associating a partner to Allah."

[20636] 9. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who performs adultery has left the state of belief, one who drinks wine has left belief, and one who breaks their fast in the month of Ramadan purposely has left belief."

[20641] 14. Ibn Bukayr said, "I asked Imam al-Baqir (p) about the saying of the Messenger of Allah, 'If a person commits adultery, then the spirit of Allah will leave them.' He said, 'It is Allah's saying, "and strengthened them with a spirit from Him"[51]—that is the spirit which leaves them.'"

51. The Quran 58:22 (AQQ).

[20645] 18. Imam al-Kadhim (p) was asked, "Do the greater sins remove one from the state of faith?" He said, "Yes, and those sins that are less than the greater sins, because the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'An adulterer does not commit adultery while a believer and does not steal while a believer.'"

20649] 22. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The greater sins are seven. They were revealed to us and removed from us. The first is associating a partner to Allah Almighty. The others are killing a soul that Allah prohibited from killing, embezzling the wealth of an orphan, disobedience to one's parents, accusing a chaste woman of adultery, fleeing from *jihad*, and rejecting our right."

[20652] 25. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Lying about Allah, His Prophet, and His representatives (pbut) are part of the greater sins."

[20653] 26. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "One who says that I said what I did not say, then let them expect a seat in hellfire."

[20656] 29. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Disobedience to parents is one of the greater sins, because Allah made the one who is disobedient to their parents a disobedient deviant."

[20660] 33. By way of Imam al-Rida (p) in his letter to al-Mamun wrote, "Faith is to return that with which one has been entrusted, to avoid all the greater sins, to know within one's heart, to confirm it verbally, and to act according to principles." until he said, "and avoiding the greater sins, which are to kill a person whose killing Allah has forbidden; adultery; robbery; drinking wine; disobedience to one's parents; fleeing Islamic military service; using the wealth of an orphan out of oppression; eating [non-halal slaughtered] carcasses, blood and pork; consuming from the wealth gained through usury after knowledge of it; using non-halal wealth; gambling; cheating the scales; accusing a chaste woman of adultery; homosexuality; disparaging Allah; feeling secure from Allah's punishment (cunning); despairing of Allah's mercy; aiding or siding

with oppressors; taking a false oath; withholding others' rights when one is financially capable of paying them; lying; pride; excess and wastefulness; betrayal; being heedless of hajj; enmity towards the representatives of Allah; busying oneself with entertainment; and being adamant about committing sins."

# *Chapter 47*

## The Correctness of Repentance for Major Sins

Out of His Mercy and Compassion Our Lord has opened the perpetual door of repentance for us. And it is important through our actions to find ourselves at this door often, pleading and seeking the compassion of our Creator. Seeking God's forgiveness is not solely an oral ritual. Instead, it is sincere regret for our lapses and a commitment to God to stay committed to His obedience.

[20665] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely Allah does not forgive ascribing a partner to Him, and he forgives all else for whom He wills, the greater sins and any other sins." I said, "Does the exception include the greater sins?" He said, "Yes."

[20666] 2. Isaac ibn Ammar asked Imam al-Sadiq (p), "Does Allah have exceptions within the greater sins that He will forgive whom He wills?" He (p) said, "Yes."

[20667] 3. It was reported by several of our companions, by way of Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Khalid, by way of Ibn Mahbub, by way of Hisham ibn Salim, by way of those whom he mentioned, by way of Abu Abdullah (p) who said, "There is no believer who commits forty greater sins in one day and says with regret, 'I seek forgiveness from Allah of Whom there is no other, the Living, the Supportive, the Beauty of the heavens and the earth, the Majestic and Graceful, and I ask Him to pray over Muhammad and his progeny and to forgive me.' except that Allah will indeed forgive that person, and there is no good in any person who commits more than forty greater sins in one day."

[20668] 4. Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn (p) reported, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'My intercession is for those of my nation who have committed the greater sins.'"

[20670] 6. He said, "The Master of the Faithful (p) said, "There is no intercession that is more successful than repentance."

[20671] 7. He said, "Imam al-Sadiq (p) was asked about Allah's verse, 'Surely Allah does not forgive ascribing a partner to Him, and he forgives all else for whom He wills.' 'Are the greater sins included in the will of Allah?' He said, 'Yes, if He wills, He tortures, and whom He wills He forgives.'"

[20672] 8. Imam al-Sadiq (p) regarded Allah Almighty's verse, "And one who kills a believer on purpose then they will be in hellfire eternally." He said, "Their judgment will be hellfire, if He passes such a verdict upon them."

[20673] 9. Imam al-Baqir (p), in the narration of *Islam and Faith* said, "Faith refers to one who bears witness that there is no god except Allah," until he said, "And he does not meet Allah [on the Day of Judgment] with a sin which Allah punishes with hellfire?" He said, "It is not what you think. Rather, it is someone who does not meet Allah [on the Day of Judgment] with a sin that Allah has punished with hellfire and has not repented for it."

[20674] 10. Imam al-Rida (p) heard several companions say, "May Allah's damnation be upon one who fights Ali (p)." He then said to them, "Say except he who repents and mends his ways." He then said, "The sin of one who abandons their sin without repentance is much greater than that of one who fights their sin and then repents [after committing it]."

[20675] 11. Imam al-Kadhim (p) said, "Those of the believers who avoid the greater sins will not be asked about the lesser sins [on the Day of Judgment] as Allah Almighty states, 'If you avoid the greater prohibitions, your sins will be absolved and you will be placed in a

gracious place.'" I said, "For who then will there be intercession?" He said, "My father told me, by way of his fathers, by way of Ali (p) who said, 'the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Surely, my intercession is only for those of my nation who have committed the greater sins. As for those who have done well,[52] they will not be harmed.'"" Ibn Abi Umayr said, "I then said to him, 'Oh son of the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp), how then will be the intercession for those who committed the greater sins, and Allah Almighty states, "And they do not intercede except for those who He has accepted." And is one who commits the greater sins not considered accepted by Allah?'" He then said [in response], "Oh Abu Ahmad! There is no believer except one who commits a sin, feels hurt that he did so, and regrets it, for which the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Regret is sufficient repentance.'" and he said, "One whose good deeds make them happy and their bad deeds hurt them [causing regret], then they are a believer. Someone who does not regret a sin that they commit is not a believer and will not be given intercession," until he said, "The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, 'With repentance there is no greater sin, and with persistence there is no small sin.'"

52. Meaning those who have repented.

# *Chapter 48*

## The Prohibition of Persisting in Committing Sin and the Obligation to Repent and Seek Forgiveness

An accumulation of sins, however small we believe them to be, are acts of disobedience which require us to seek forgiveness while we have the opportunity. Through consistent repentance and turning back to God, the light of humility will manifest in our hearts and souls until we become modest in front of God, so that, with His help, we no longer will be among the transgressors.

[20679] 1. By way of Abu Basir who said, "I heard Imam al-Sadiq (p) say, 'No, by Allah! He will not accept any of his acts of obedience because of his persistence in committing acts of disobedience.'"

[20680] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'One of the signs of deviation is gazing [at that which is forbidden], being harsh-hearted, taking extra care to seek worldly gains, and persistence in committing sins.'"

[20681] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There is no small sin with persistence, nor any greater sin with repentance."

# *Chapter 49*

## Several Forbidden and Abhorred Characteristics to Avoid

With focus and determination, we can cultivate virtues and positive characteristics, while eradicating vices and diseases of the soul which often plague humans. Pride, for instance, is among the primordial sins, which afflicted Satan as he refused to prostrate to Adam, and if we continue to allow such vices to live in our souls, what strides are we making in obeying God?

[20684] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The foundations of disbelief are three: greed, pride, and envy."

[20685] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, 'The pillars of disbelief are four: desire, fear, hatred and, anger.'"

[20686] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'There are six main things which cause disobedience to Allah: love of the world, love of leadership, love of food, love of sleep, love of comfort, and love of women.'"

[20687] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'A person is considered a hypocrite if they have the following three traits, even if they fast, pray, or claim to be Muslim: [Firstly] when entrusted, they betray. [Secondly], if they speak, they lie. [Thirdly], if they promise, they break their promise. Surely Allah Almighty said in His book, "Indeed Allah does not like

the treacherous."[53] And He said, "Allah's wrath shall be upon him if he were lying."[54] And Allah said, "And mention in the Book Ismail. Indeed he was true to his promise, and an apostle and a prophet.""[55]

[20688] 5. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Should I tell you about evil men?" We said, "Yes, oh Messenger of Allah!" He said, "Evil men are the ones who backbite lies, are daring, excessive, who eat alone, who do not support others, who beat their slaves, and those whose children seek refuge in others."

[20693] 10. Imam Ali (p), said, "Disbelief has four pillars: corruption, over-exaggeration, doubt, and confusion. Corruption has four branches: not connecting with others, blindness, inattentiveness, and deviation. Over-exaggeration has four branches: delving deeply into one's own opinions, conflict arising from one's opinions, deviation from the straight path, and breaking ties with others. Doubt has four branches: duplicity, whim, hesitation, and submissiveness. Confusion has four branches: liking adornments, the whispering of the self, justifying deviation, and mistaking falsehood for truth. Hypocrisy has four pillars: whim, feeling weak, keeping track of others, and greed. Whim has four branches: oppression, enmity, desire, and deviation. Feeling weak has four branches: deceit, hope, fear, and procrastination. Keeping track of others has four branches: pride, conceit, primitive ignorance, and prejudice. And greed has four branches: joy, fun, overstepping one's boundaries, and love of procreation."

[20694] 11. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) said, "A hypocrite forbids but does not forbid themselves, they command others to do things that they do not do, and if they get up to pray, they are distracted." I said, "Oh Messenger of Allah, and what is this distraction?" He said, "It is

53. The Quran 8:58 (AQQ).
54. The Quran 24:7 (AQQ).
55. The Quran 19:54 (AQQ).

looking at places [other than the prayer mat when praying], when bowing it is prolonging the bow, when it is night time their greatest worry is dinner even though they are not fasting, and upon awakening their greatest worry is sleep even though they were not sleep-deprived the night before. If they speak to you, they do not believe you. If you trust them, they will betray you. If you are away, they will backbite you. And if they promise you, they will break their promise."

[20695] 12. In another narration, the companion adds [to the previous], "if they bow, they prolong the bow; if they prostrate they peck [like a bird];[56] and if they sit in prayer, they raise one leg [in readiness to stand again]."

[20699] 16. Imam Ali (p) gave a sermon on Eid of Fitr in which he said, "Obey Allah in His prohibitions: accusing a chaste woman of adultery, fornication, drinking wine, cheating [in business], false testimony, and fleeing from active Islamic military service."

[20706] 23. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There are six attributes that do not exist in a believer: bringing hardship upon others, negativity, harshness, lying, envy, and oppression."

56. A metaphor showing the shortness of the prostration.

# *Chapter 50*

## The Prohibition against Seeking Positions of Leadership without Assurance of One's Own Equity

The soul has an unfortunate inclination to search for power and authority, often to the detriment of others. Thus, we should stay away from leadership if our ego is determined to seek it for dominance or power as opposed to guidance and service. History is a testimony to the humility with which the Messenger (pbuh&hp) and Imam Ali (p) led the early Muslim community, not for the desire of power or to be considered a leader, but instead to work for God and bring their community out of darkness and into light.

[20707] 1. Imam al-Kadhim (p) mentioned a man and said, "Surely, he loves to be a leader." He then said, "Leadership is as detrimental to the religion of a Muslim as two rabid wolves viciously attacking a flock of sheep that have been abandoned by their shepherds."

[20708] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who seeks positions of leadership will be destroyed."

[20709] 3. Abu Hamza al-Thumali narrated that Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Beware of leadership."

[20710] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Beware of the types of leaders who are not qualified for leadership but act as though they are. For, by Allah, those who follow an unworthy leader will perish with them."

[20718] 12. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said in a narration, "What is with you and positions of leadership! Surely, Muslims have one leadership. Beware of following oppressive leaders, for such people ruin others."

[20720] 14. The Holy Prophet (pbuh&hp), said, "Surely, one who leads people will be brought on the Day of Judgment with hands chained to his neck. If he leads them according to the command of Allah, then he will be freed. However, if he was oppressive, he will be thrown in hellfire, and that is the worst of fates."

# *Chapter 51*

## The Recommendation to Stay Home for Those Who Have Difficulty Avoiding the Pitfalls of Socialization While Still Maintaining Other's Rights

In life, it is important to find the proper balance between coexistence [*al-isharah*] and solitude, particularly when there are potential risks of falling into sin. Of course, we have social responsibilities and must fulfil the rights of others in our communities, in addition to engaging with others in commanding them to do good and forbidding them from doing evil [*amr bi al-maruf* and *nahi al-munkar*], as the Quran often commands. But in keeping a spiritual balance, it is also vital to restrict ourselves from engaging so much that we backbite or speak poorly of others, or only engage in social interaction to the detriment of our families or our obedience to God.

[20721] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said: "If you can be unaware [about other's affairs] then do so, and do not worry if people do not praise you or if people speak ill of you, as long as you are praised by Allah." until he said, "If you can stay home then do so, for if you do leave you must not backbite, lie, be envious, be duplicitous, be fake, or conspire." He then said, "The best monastery is one's own home in which they restrain their sight, tongue, self and private parts."

[20723] 3. Imam Musa al-Kadhim (p), in a long narration in which he advises Hisham bin al-Hakam, said, "O Hisham, patience in solitude is a sign of the strength of the intellect. For one who abandons the people of the world and those seeking it and seeks what Allah has [for them] becomes so that Allah is the Source of their joy in their

solitude, their Companion during their loneliness, their Sustainer during their need, and the One Who gives them pride without having a tribe."

[20725] 5. Imam Ali (p) said, "Paradise [*tuba*] will be the reward of the one who stays at home, where they eat their piece of bread [sustenance], cry over their sins, and are weary of themselves while people are at rest because of them [their good deeds].

# *Chapter 52*

## The Prohibition against Using Religion to Falsely Fulfill One's Worldly Desires

Spiritual abuse, or using religion as a self-serving tool, has historically been a pitfall of believers. Seeking knowledge about one's religion and being a believer means to remain steadfast on the path of God, and the best members of our communities know the importance of remaining vigilant over the self, so that we do not use God, His prophets, or representatives in a way that seeks worldly pleasure and desire.

[20728] 1. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Allah Almighty says, 'A valley in hell [way] will be the abode for those who falsely gain from this world through religion, those who kill the ones who demand equity from people, and those whom the believer walks among in a state of *taqiyya*. Have they taken Me for granted? Or do they defy Me? For I swear by Myself I will bring down unto them unrest the like of which will leave them bewildered [not knowing what struck them]!'"

[20729] 2. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said in the last sermon he gave, "And as for one who was offered this world and the hereafter and chose this world instead of the hereafter, they will meet their Lord without one good deed with which to protect themselves from hell. As for one who selects the hereafter and abandons the world, then Allah will be pleased with them on the Day of Judgment."

# *Chapter 53*

## The Obligation to Control One's Anger to Prevent Prohibited Actions and How to Actually Control That Anger

A plethora of traditions from the Holy Household (pbut) emphasize controlling our anger and the potential transgressions that can originate from one moment of rage. Anger is a natural human emotion that can stem from stress, hunger, or even exhaustion, yet channelling our souls to ways of using anger that are lawful is the goal of our natural emotion. For instance, sometimes we need anger for bravery, courage, speaking out against injustices, or anger for the sake of God can be an act of obedience to Him.

[20731] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The believer is the one who when angered, their anger does not cause them to fall off the path of truth. And if they are pleased, their pleasure will not cause them to fall into falsehood. And when they are given power, they do not take more than what is their due."

[20732] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Anger ruins faith just as vinegar ruins honey.'"

[20733] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Anger is the key to every evil."

[20734] 4. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "A person becomes angry and is restless until they enter hell. Therefore, any person who is angry at people while standing should sit at once, for it removes the toxicity of Satan. And anyone who is angry at a relative, should come near them and touch them, for when they touch a relative in a state of anger, they are pacified."

[20736] 6. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'On the Day of Judgment Allah will protect one who refrains from dishonoring people's families. And one who withholds their anger from people, Allah Almighty will withhold the torture of the Day of Judgment from them.'"

[20738] 8. A companion approached Imam al-Sadiq (p) and said, "Admonish me with something that I will follow." He (p) said, "Surely, a man approached the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) and said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Teach me with advice that I will follow.' He (pbuh&hp) said. 'Go and do not succumb to anger.' The man then asked him again. He (pbuh&hp) said, 'Go and do not succumb to anger' (three times)."

[20739] 9. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who withholds anger, Allah hides their indecencies."

[20740] 10. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "It is written in the Torah in Moses' private supplication to Allah, [that Allah said]: 'O Moses! Withhold your anger from your people and I will withhold My anger from you.'"

[20741] 11. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Anger erases the heart of the wise." And he said, "One who does not control their anger does not control their intellect."

[20745] 15. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The disciples of Jesus (p) said, 'What is the worst thing?' He said, 'The worst thing is the anger of Allah Almighty.' They said, 'How can we protect ourselves from the anger of Allah?' He said, 'Do not become angry.' They said, 'And how does anger start?' He said, 'Conceit, dictatorship, and belittling people.'"

# *Chapter 54*

## The Obligation to Remember Allah in Times of Anger

As mentioned earlier, anger is a human emotion that can lead us toward acts of vice, yet one of the means of controlling ourselves and keeping our anger from causing us to commit sin is to humble ourselves by remembering our Creator.

[20751] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Allah Almighty revealed to some of his prophets, 'Oh son of Adam! Remember Me when you are angry, and I will remember you when I am angry, and I will not show you My wrath as I would those towards whom I am wrathful and accept Me as your cause of victory. For My supporting your success is better than your supporting yourself.'"

[20752] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) narrated the same as the preceding hadith and added, "And if you were oppressed, then accept My supporting your success, for My support is better for you than your own."

# *Chapter 55*

## The Prohibition of Envy

A believer should continue to grow and cultivate themselves so that their hearts hold only the remembrance of God, void of any speck of desire for this material world. Naturally, reaching this goal is challenging. Nonetheless, it starts with identifying the diseases of the soul, such as envy, the resentful emotion we may feel when we see others' possessions or material gains.

[20754] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Surely, a person may say something without thinking and this may cause them to fall into disbelief. Surely, envy eats away faith just as fire eats through wood."

[20756] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Be pious [be conscious of Allah] and do not be envious of each other."

[20757] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Poverty can drive a person to disbelief [in Allah], and envy can change fate.'"

And the Imam (p) said, "The bane of religion is envy, conceit, and boastfulness."

[20759] 6. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Allah Almighty said to Musa son of Imran, "O son of Imran! Do not envy people for what I have bestowed upon them from My favors, and do not wish what they have for yourself, because the envious person is ungrateful for what I have given them,

and that envy stands as a barrier between Me and what I have apportioned to my worshippers. The person who does so is not of Me and I am not of them.""""

[20761] 8. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There are three things from which a prophet cannot be saved let alone others: contemplating silent whispers about others, recklessness, and envy, except that a believer does not act on their envy."

[20765] 12. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There are three foundations of disbelief: miserliness, arrogance, and envy."

[20766] 13. Imam Ali (p) said, "Envy of a friend is a result of a lack of endearment."

[20767] 14. Imam Ali (p) said, "Good health is a result of a lack of envy [in one's heart]."

# *Chapter 56*

## Several Things for Which [Allah] Excuses Someone

Out of God's grace and mercy, He has offered us certain exemptions so that we do not fill our minds with things that may take us away from our ultimate aim, which is to fulfil our duties and responsibilities to our Creator.

[20769] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'My nation has been excused from nine things: mistakes, that which they have forgotten, that which they were compelled to do, that which they do not know, that which they cannot bear, that which they had no choice but to do, envy, recklessness, and contemplation of the evil whispers in solitude as long as they do not speak of it.'"

[20770] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'My nation has been excused from four characteristics: its mistakes, its forgetfulness, what it has been compelled to do, and that which they cannot bear, and that is where Allah Almighty says, "Our Lord! Take us not to task if we forget or make mistakes! Our Lord! Place not upon us a burden as You placed on those who were before us! Our Lord! Lay not upon us what we have no strength to bear!"[57] And where He says, "barring someone who is compelled while his heart is at rest in faith."'"[58]

57. The Quran 2:286 (AQQ).
58. The Quran 16:106 (AQQ).

# *Chapter 57*

## The Prohibition of Prejudice Except for the Truth

We live in a world where we see others based on physical forms, as opposed to examining others' character and seeing the metaphysical. And among the biggest spiritual diseases that stem from this reality are prejudice and arrogance based on things like race, class, or ethnicity. These diseases have been prominent since prophetic times, and they are among the first things that the Messenger sought to eradicate. Similarly, in our journey to the Creator, it is vital to self-assess and remind ourselves that we are all the creations of God.

[20772] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who acts with prejudice or one for whom a person acts with prejudice will be removed from their state of faith."

[20773] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'Anyone who has the weight of a mustard seed of prejudice (racism) in their heart will be resurrected by Allah on the Day of Judgment as a pre-Islamic Arabian.'"

[20776] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The angels thought that Iblis (Satan) was an angel like them; only Allah knew that he was not. It was Satan that exposed himself with his prejudice [for his own kind] and anger by saying, 'You created me from fire and him from clay.'"

[20778] 7. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) was asked about prejudice for one's own people, and he said, "The prejudice that causes one to fall into sin is when one sees those who are evil of their people better than those who are righteous of another group of people. It is not

prejudice for one to love one's own people, but it is prejudice for one to aid his people to oppress others."

# *Chapter 58*

## The Prohibition of Arrogance

As noted earlier, among the greatest diseases that afflict the son of Adam are pride and arrogance that cause us to look down upon others based on class, race, gender, and even religiosity. The Messenger of God and his pure family exemplified a kind, good-hearted nature to everyone and never passed judgment in a way that was demeaning. Yet, arrogance continues to be a plague in the hearts of many, and it is important to take stock of ourselves often to reach humility. By charitable acts, recommended prayers, and reflecting on the supplications of the Ahl al-Bayt (pbut), we have an opportunity to cultivate the tender-heartedness that we need.

[20781] 1. Someone asked Imam al-Sadiq (p) about what the lowest form of atheism was, and he responded, "Surely, arrogance is the lowest."

[20784] 4. Imam al-Baqir (p) and Imam al-Sadiq (p) have said, "No one with an atom's weight of arrogance will enter heaven."

[20787] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The arrogant are [temporarily] made in the image of an ant to be stepped upon by people until Allah has completed the accounting [on the Day of Judgment]."

[20789] 9. Imam al-Sadiq (p) advised his companions, "Beware of the feeling of greatness and arrogance, for arrogance is the garb of Allah Almighty and one who competes with Allah for His garb will be destroyed by Allah and humiliated on the Day of Judgment."

[20790] 10. By way of Imam al-Sadiq (p), by way of his father (p), that Imam Ali (p) said, "The forehead of every son of Adam is in the hands of an angel. If he becomes arrogant, the angel drags his forehead to the ground, and then says to him, 'Be humble, may Allah make you humble.' If he does become humble, he holds him by his forehead and says to him, 'Raise your head, may Allah raise your head, and may He never bring you down because of your humility for the sake of Allah.'"

[20794] 14. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Arrogance is a vehicle to hellfire."

[20796] 16. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Most of the people of hell are the arrogant [ones]."

[20797] 17. By way of Imam al-Sadiq (p), by way of his father (p), by way of his forefathers (pbut) who said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'The most beloved of you to me and those of you who are closest to my side on the Day of Judgment are those of you with the best manners and the humblest. And the farthest from me on the Day of Judgment are the gossipers and the arrogant.'"

As we see from the legacy of the Prophet and his family (pbut), they were such magnetic personalities because of how humble they were in front of others, which attracted people to their sacred message.

[20798] 18. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) had a she-camel that no camel could win against in a race. One day he raced an Arab Bedouin's camel and it [the Prophet's camel] lost. The Muslims were depressed at the loss. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'It became arrogant, and anything that becomes arrogant is humbled by Allah.'"

# *Chapter 59*

## The Prohibition of Conceit, Arrogance, and Deception

Good character is a gift that comes from God for those who strive for it. Naturally, it requires a sense of focus and diligence, but upon immersing ourselves in the remembrance of God and reminding ourselves of the temporary nature of this transient world, our intentions, deeds, and actions will attain the pleasure of the Lord of the Worlds. In the following traditions, we get a glimpse into the danger we can fall into if we are not careful and intentional about how we care for our own souls.

[20799] 1. By way of Imam al-Baqir (p) who said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'There are three types of people to whom Allah will neither speak nor look at on the Day of Judgment, nor will He purify them, and they will receive a painful torture: an older man who is a fornicator, an arrogant king, and the deceptive person that hides in waiting.'"

[20800] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The source of every arrogant person's arrogance is rooted in an internal sense of deficiency."

[20803] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p), in his advice to his companions, said, "Beware of arrogance and know that a worshipper will not be dedicated to Allah if they see themselves to be better than Allah, for they will be too arrogant to follow the religion of Allah. Therefore, be upright with Allah and do not fall out of Allah's favor only to become one of the losers in the hereafter. May Allah protect us and you from arrogance towards Him."

[20804] 6. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, Allah, the Blessed, the Almighty, hates the house that consumes a great deal of meat, and the obese meat-lover." Some of our companions said to him, "O son of the Messenger of Allah, we love meat and meat is always in our houses!" He (p) responded, "You misunderstood. The house of meat-eaters means those homes in which the flesh of people is metaphorically eaten by backbiting. As for the obese meat-eater, this is the person who is arrogant, condescending, and deceptive in their actions."

[20807] 9. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'For one who walks on this earth deceiving others, the earth and those above and below it will pray that that person will be deprived of Allah's mercy.'"

[20809] 11. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'In the sky are two angels who have been given the role of humbling anyone who becomes arrogant.'"

[20813] 15. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "If you find the following three attributes in a person, then do not be embarrassed to say that such attributes are found in hell: profanity of speech, arrogance, and boastfulness."

# *Chapter 60*

## The Definition of the Two Prohibitions: Pride and Tyranny

When pride, arrogance, greed, or any other evil mask our hearts, it is difficult for us to see the world with clarity. Even historically, the examples of the ancient villains in the Quran, such as Iblis, Firawn, and Nimrud, all show this reality. On some level they recognized that the truth was not with them. However, vice interjects into the soul and creates false illusions such that it can cause us, as it caused them, to reject God and His signs.

2. [20815] Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Pride is to be blind to people and it is the inability to value the truth."

3. [20816] The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The greatest pride is to be blind to people and the inability to value the truth." A companion asked, "What does that mean?" He said, "To be ignorant of the truth and to backstab people of the truth. One who does so has competed with Allah for His position."

# *Chapter 61*

## Prohibiting the Love of Worldly Prohibitions and the Obligation to Despise Them

All religious traditions warn us against the dangers of the love of this world, and numerous traditions from the Holy Household (pbut) emphasize how attachment to this transient abode may lead to our ultimate detriment. In Karbala, it was Umar ibn Saad who famously sought political power, status, and wealth as his incentive to shed the blood of the leader of the youth of paradise, Imam Hussain (p). Similarly, even on a small scale there is danger of the world and its offerings attracting us. God says in the Quran, "The life of the world is nothing but play and diversion, and the abode of the Hereafter is surely better for those who are Godwary. Do you not apply reason?"[59] It is important for us to hold ourselves accountable, humble ourselves by reminding our hearts and souls that this world is transient, and be aware of our own mortality as often as possible.

[20821] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The source of all error is the love of the world."

[20822] 2. Someone asked Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p), "Which is the best of deeds?" He said, "After knowing [*marifa*] Allah and His Messenger (pbuh&hp), there is nothing better than despising this world, for it is the root of many ills and disobedience. The first way Allah was disobeyed was with pride," then he said, "then stinginess, then envy, and it was the sin of the son of Adam, when he envied his brother and killed him. From them came the love of women, the love of the world, the love of leadership, the love of relaxation, the love of talking, the love of loftiness and wealth, until they exhibited

59. The Quran 6:32 (AQQ).

seven attributes, and all collectively made up the love of the (materialistic) world. After knowing this, the prophets and scholars said, 'The love of the world is the source of all sin, and the world is of two types: the world of transcendence and the world of damnation.'"

[20825] 5. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "One who loves this world will harm their hereafter."

# *Chapter 62*

## The Recommendation for Asceticism in the World and the Definition of Asceticism

As mentioned in the last section, attachment to and infatuation with this world leave a dangerous imprint on our hearts and souls. God created this world as a test and as a stepping stone to the hereafter, thus we should consistently remind ourselves that it passes very quickly. At the same time, the traditions and advice of the Prophet and his family (pbut) do not command us to abandon this world entirely but instead to recognize that it is a world of temptation so that it does not consume us. We avoid this temptation by fulfilling our religious obligations and staying away from forbidden things. At the same time, we should be thankful when we are a recipient of blessings and be patient during trials and tribulations.

[20827] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Allah will place wisdom in the heart of one who is ascetic in the world and will make their tongue speak that wisdom. He will make them see the faults of the world and its remedies, and He will securely remove them from it into the peaceful abode."

[20830] 4. Imam Ali (p) said, "The most helpful manners (ethics) in religion is asceticism."

[20831] 5. In a series of traditions, Imam Ali (p) said, "If all good was in a house, its key would be asceticism.

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'One will not attain the beauty of faith until they do not care for the sustenance of this world.'"

Imam al-Sadiq (p) then said, "It is forbidden for your hearts to know the beauty of belief until you become ascetic."

[20833] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Every heart that has doubt or ascribes a partner to Allah is unfit. They sought asceticism for the sole reason that they wanted their hearts to be free for the hereafter only."

[20835] 9. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) said, "Be ascetic in this world; be one of those who seek the hereafter. Surely those who are ascetic in this world have taken the earth as their blanket, the sand as their beds, water as their fragrance, and they have taken as little as possible from this world."

[20837] 11. When someone asked Imam Ali (p), "What is asceticism in this world?" he (p) said, "To overcome its prohibitions."

[20838] 12. Imam Ali (p) said, "Asceticism in this world is not to have false hope in the future (to know that this world could end at any time), to be thankful for every blessing, and to be precautious when it comes to the prohibitions decreed by Allah."

[20841] 15. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The righteousness of the first of this nation is through asceticism and certitude, and the detriment of the last of this nation is through miserliness and false hope (procrastination)."

[20842] 16. When someone asked Imam al-Sadiq (p) about asceticism in this world, he said, "The one who forgoes the permissible out of fear of being questioned, and refrains from its prohibitions out of fear of punishment."

# *Chapter 63*

## The Recommendation to Abstain from What Exceeds What is Necessary for This World

In this world, it is easy for accumulation and excess to consume us. Society teaches us to continue to increase our wealth and position, so that life resembles a form of competition. And while we sometimes are consumed by this desire, the idea is to cultivate our spirituality so that we are not distracted by the world, but instead our minds and hearts are God-centric, and we hold values and good etiquette as the most important objects to accumulate.

[20843] 1. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "What do I have to do with this world? I am like a traveler who stops under a tree on a summer's day and then leaves the tree behind."

[20845] 3. *The Book of Ali* (p) mentions, "The world's likeness is that of a snake. How smooth it is to the touch! However, inside its mouth is a deadly poison that a rational man avoids, while an ignorant boy throws himself towards it."

[20848] 5. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "What is little and sufficient is better than that which is excessive and occupies one's time."

[20848] 6. In Imam Ali's last will and testament to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, he said, "There is no wealth that pushes away need except acceptance of [ordained] sustenance, and the one who is satisfied with necessity only will have regular relaxation and can expect less need. Miserliness causes sin to overwhelm one."

[20850] 8. Imam Ali (p) said, "O son of Adam! What you earned that is beyond your daily sustenance, you are storing for someone other than yourself."

[20851] 9. Imam Ali (p) said, "Everything that is done economically is sufficient."

[20852] 10. Imam Ali (p) said, "Asceticism is found between two words of the Holy Quran, 'So that you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor exult for what comes your way.'[60] Therefore, one who is not regretful of the past and is not overly joyous about the future has attained both ends of asceticism."

60. The Quran 57:23 (AQQ).

# *Chapter 64*

## The Abhorrence of Vigilance over the World

There is a need for us to cultivate balance within ourselves between this world and the next. This temporal abode is meant to serve as a stepping stone for the world beyond and should be a means as opposed to the end.

[20853] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, **"**The one who is greedy for the world is like a silkworm: the more it wraps itself in silk, the farther it is from emerging, until it dies of grief."

Imam al-Sadiq (p) also said, "The wealthiest of wealth is not to be imprisoned by the chains of vigilance for this world." And he said, "Do not busy your hearts with what has past, for you will keep your minds from preparing for what has not come (death)."

[20854] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The furthest a worshipper is from Allah Almighty is when nothing occupies them other than their stomach and their genitals."

[20855] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who is most entangled in this world will experience the greatest sense of loss when they depart it."

[20856] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The covetous person is deprived of two qualities and burdened with two others: they are deprived of contentment, so they lack peace of mind, and they are deprived of satisfaction, so they lack certainty."

# *Chapter 65*

## The Abhorrence of Love of Wealth and Status

Islamic tradition does not discourage the pleasures of this world, but naturally there is a fear of overconsumption, as opposed to the moderation that the teachings of the Prophet and his family (pbut) encourage. Thus, it is important to be vigilant of the distractions of this temporal world, so that we wealth, possessions, or the power and authority that we may want do not consume us.

[20857] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Love of wealth and status is more destructive to the religion of the Muslim than two rabid wolves at each end of a flock of sheep whose shepherds are away."

[20858] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Satan tries to direct humans in all things. Therefore, if he afflicts them (with the love of the world), love of wealth will be where he will capture them (like a hunter capturing its prey) and control them."

[20859] 3. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The dinar and the dirham (money) have destroyed those before you and will destroy you."

# *Chapter 66*

## The Abhorrence of Boredom and Laziness

Every moment and opportunity of our lives is a unique blessing, though one that we unfortunately never get back, for time passes without any chance of recovery. This, of course, does not mean that we should fill our moments with acts of worship and obedience every second, but at least we should recognize the importance of balance. In the Quran, God swears by time, and maintains that most of humanity is in a loss.[61] It is important to have a way to manage our time. We should dedicate a part of our day to God, another part should be to fulfil our familial and communal responsibilities, and finally, we should engage in permissible acts during our free time. A blessed day is most certainly one that begins with God and ends with God.

[20860] 1. Imam al-Kadhim (p) said in his last will and testament to some of his children, "Beware of laziness and boredom, for they prevent you from your share of the world and the hereafter."

[20861] 2. In his last will and testament, the Prophet (pbuh&hp) said to Imam Ali (p), "O Ali! Do not jest, for it removes your majesty; do not lie, for it removes the brightness of your face; and beware of two attributes: boredom and laziness. For if you are bored, you will not be patient enough to realize the truth, and if you are lazy, you will not do that which is the truth. O Ali! One whom boredom possesses loses peace of mind."

[20862] 3. The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, "There are three signs of one who is patient: the first is that they do not feel lazy, the second is

61. The Quran 103:1–2.

that they are never bored, the third is that they never complain of their Lord Almighty."

[20863] 4. Imam al-Kadhim (p) said to some of his children, "Beware of joking, for it removes the light of your faith and it belittles your chivalry. And beware of boredom and laziness, for they keep you from getting your share of the world and the hereafter."

# *Chapter 67*

## The Abhorrence of Greed

Contentment is one of the most important spiritual pillars that a believer seeks to reach in their life. True contentment and accepting all of God's decrees is challenging, especially since distractions fill our lives, particularly the bombardment of images depicting societal standards. We live in a system where accumulation of things is the ultimate end instead of a means for temporary success. Through reflection on the traditions of God's Prophet and his family (pbut), we see such a strong focus on keeping vigilance over our hearts and souls from distraction by the pleasures of this world.

[20864] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "How ugly it is for a believer to have a desire that humiliates them."

[20865] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The worst of worshippers is the one who is led by greed, and the worst of worshippers is the one who has a need that humiliates them."

[20866] 3. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) said, "I saw the culmination of all good come from extracting greed for that which others possess from oneself."

[20867] 4. Someone asked Imam al-Sadiq (p), "What ingrains faith in a worshipper?" He said, "Precaution, and that which removes them from the state of faith is greed."

[20868] 5. In Imam Ali's last will and testament to Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyyah, he said, "If you would like to collect the good of this world and the hereafter, abstain from greed for what people possess."

[20869] 6. A man asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp), "Teach me something, O Messenger of Allah." He (pbuh&hp) said, "Have despair in what people possess, for possessions are not true wealth." The man said, "Teach me more, O Messenger of Allah." He (pbuh&hp) said, "Beware of greed, for it is true poverty."

[20870] 7. Someone asked Imam Ali (p), "With what can one stabilize their faith?" Imam Ali (p) replied, "By being precautious." Then someone asked, "What then is the cause of the dissolution of faith?" He (p) said, "Greed."

[20871] 8. Imam Ali (p) said, "The greatest cause of the destruction of the intellect is the flash of one's greed."

[20872] 9. A companion came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Give me the shortest advice so that I may memorize it." He (pbuh&hp) said, "I advise you of five things: do not be concerned with what is the hands of people for that is not true wealth, beware of greed for it is true poverty, pray as though it is your last day, beware of doing those things for which you would apologize, and love for your brother what you love for yourself."

# *Chapter 68*

## The Abhorrence of Idiocy

Living a meaningful life means being watchful over our deeds and actions at every juncture. This life is temporary, and remembering our transient state allows us to be present in every moment. Our thoughts, actions, and way of life sow the seeds for success and contentment in this world and the next.

[20873] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Whoever is granted the attribute of *al-kharq* (recklessness or impudence) is deprived of faith."

[20874] 2. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "If irrational behavior was a creation that could be seen, it would be the ugliest of creations."

# *Chapter 69*

## The Prohibition of Bad Manners

One's mannerisms and external behavior reflect their internal, spiritual state. Our interactions with others stem from the state of our hearts; whether they hold such things as pride, jealousy, or animosity for others shows on our faces and in our conversations. Thus, being aware of our behaviors and interactions leads to a focus on our internal spiritual state and the purification of our hearts.

[20875] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, bad manners spoil one's deeds just as vinegar spoils honey."

[20876] 2. The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, "Allah does not accept the repentance of one who is ill-mannered." Someone asked, "How so, O Messenger of Allah?" He (pbuh&hp) said, "Because such a person repents from one sin only to fall into a greater one."

[20877] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, bad manners spoil faith just as vinegar spoils honey."

[20878] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One whose manners deteriorate tortures themselves."

[20879] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Allah Almighty revealed to some of his prophets that bad manners spoil one's deeds just as vinegar spoils honey."

[20880] 6. In the Prophet's last will and testament to Imam Ali (p), he (pbuh&hp) said, "O Ali, for every sin there is repentance except bad manners. For every time the ill-mannered person leaves one sin, they enter another."

[20881] 7. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Adhere to good manners, because the well-mannered person will inevitably be in paradise; beware of bad manners, for an ill-mannered person will inevitably be in hellfire."

[20882] 8. Imam Ali (p) said, "For every sin there is repentance, and every repenter will receive their forgiveness except the one who is ill-mannered, because they do not repent for a sin except that they fall into another, eviler one."

# *Chapter 70*

## The Prohibition against Being Unable to Manage One's Financial Affairs and of Being One from Whose Evil Others Must Guard Themselves

Illuminating prophetic character is a responsibility of all believers who love and submit to the teachings of our Messenger Muhammad (pbuh&hp). A main part of the etiquette and interactions of the Prophet was that everyone in his company felt a sense of comfort and attraction to his magnetic personality. Consciousness of our words and deeds around others, for the sake of God, is a key step in cultivating our hearts.

[20883] 1. Two men were shouting profanities at each other, to which Imam al-Kadhim (p) said, "The one who initiates the injustice is more unjust, and the burden of his sin and the burden of the sin of his companion is upon him unless the wronged one exceeds the limits of justice."

[20884] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Do not be of those who do not know how to manage their affairs, for your Imams were not such people."

[20885] 3. Imam Ali (p) said, "Neither *sufh* (the inability to manage one's affairs) nor heedlessness exist in the heart of the scholar."

[20886] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "*Sufh* is a wretched creation. It offends those below it and concedes to those above it."

[20887] 5. The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, "The evilest of Allah's creations is the one with whom you hate to sit in a gathering because of their profanity."

[20888] 6. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The most despised of Allah's creation to Him is one from whose tongue people protect themselves."

[20889] 7. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The evilest people on the Day of Judgment are those whom others treat graciously to protect themselves from their evil."

[20891] 9. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One whose tongue is feared by people is in hellfire."

# *Chapter 71*

## The Prohibition of Profanity and the Obligation to Safeguard the Tongue

Society and contemporary culture call us to consistently project ourselves, often at the expense of others. Thus, poor language and profanity is something that we are very accustomed to hearing and uttering. Undoubtedly the words that we speak can lead to considerable damage to others, and bad language is a symbol of a weakness of the heart.

[20892] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One of the undoubted signs of polytheism is that a person is known to have a vulgar tongue, not caring what they say or what is said about them."

[20893] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Surely, Allah despises the vulgar person that is known for profanity."

[20894] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely profanity, vulgarity, and having a scathing tongue are attributes of hypocrisy."

[20895] 4. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Surely, Allah dislikes the obscene, the impudent, and the persistent beggar."

[20896] 5. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said to Aisha, "O Aisha! If profanity were an example, it would be an example of ill-doing."

[20897] 6. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Allah extracts the blessing from the sustenance of one who directs profanity to another Muslim, He (swt) makes that person depend on themselves (meaning that Allah abandons them), and He wrecks their livelihood."

[20898] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said to a man in his court "O Sumah! What was happening between you and your camel herder? Beware of being profane, of being of those who go after worldly desires, or of being of those who damn others." The man said, "By Allah, it was because he oppressed me." He (p) said, "If he oppressed, then you did your share of oppressing him. Such is not my behavior and neither do I command my Shia (followers) to do this. Ask for repentance from your Lord, and do not repeat it." The man said, "I ask Allah for forgiveness, and I will not return to such behavior."

[20899] 8. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The evilest of Allah's worshippers is the one you avoid sitting with in a gathering because of their vulgar tongue."

[20900] 9. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Indeed, Allah loves the modest, the patient, the wealthy one who is self-sufficient, and verily, Allah hates the indecent, the rude, the beggar, and the one who boasts."

[20901] 10. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, shyness, abstinence, and to be unable to express oneself (as a weakness of expression, not a weakness of the heart) are of faith. While profanity, vulgarity, and impoliteness are of hypocrisy."

[20902] 11. In the Prophet's last will and testament to Imam Ali (p): "O Ali! The best of jihad (struggles) is not to oppress anyone. O Ali! One whose tongue people fear is of the people of hellfire. O Ali! The evilest of people is the one who people treat graciously to avoid their profanity and evil harm. O Ali! The evilest of people are those who sold their hereafter for their worldly desires, and even more evil are those who sold their hereafter for someone else's worldly desires."

# *Chapter 72*

## The Prohibition of Profanity and Not Caring What One Says

As previously mentioned, we need to consistently be vigilant over our actions and behaviors, for that is a manifestation of true piety and God-consciousness. And there is no mechanism among our blessings that can potentially be as destructive as our tongue and the way we use it.

[20903] 1. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "If you see a person that does not care about what they say or what is said to them, then they have partnered with Satan (meaning that they have ascribed Satan as a partner to Allah)."

[20904] 2. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Surely, Allah prohibited heaven for every profane, vulgar person who has little shame, and does not care what they say or what others say to them. For if you investigate why they do so, you will find that it is out of vain talk or that they have become a partner to Satan." Someone asked, "O Messenger of Allah, and are there partners of Satan (*shirk Shaytan*) among people?" The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) responded, "Have you not read where Allah Almighty states, 'And he became a partner to them in their wealth and children.'"

[20905] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Profanity is a form of abandonment of belief (Allah's rights upon humans), and abandonment of Allah's rights upon humans (belief in Him) leads to hellfire."

[20906] 4. In the Prophet's last will and testament to Imam Ali (p), he said, "O Ali! Allah has prohibited heaven for the profane,

vulgar person who neither cares about what comes out of their mouth nor what people say to them. O Ali! Tuba (a tree in heaven) will be the reward of the one who has a prolonged life and does righteous deeds."

[20907] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Modesty comes from belief in Allah (His right upon us), and belief in Allah places one in heaven (our right upon Allah if we are obedient). Obscenity, however, is a result of abandoning belief in Allah, and abandoning belief in Allah leads one to hell."

# *Chapter 73*

## The Prohibition against the Accusation of Adultery without Knowledge Even against the Disbeliever

In Islamic tradition human dignity is as sacred as the body itself, thus there is a strong prohibition from both Quranic verses and the traditions of the Prophet and his family (pbut) which prohibits accusing someone of committing adultery.

[20908] 1. Amr ibn Numan al-Jufi said, "My father had a friend that never left his side who said to his servant boy one day, 'O son of the adulteress, where were you?' Imam al-Sadiq (p) struck his own forehead and said, 'Exalted is Allah! How dare you accuse his mother of adultery! I thought that you were a precautious (believer); it seems that you have no precaution in you.' He said, 'I sacrifice myself for you! His mother is a disbeliever from Sind (a province in India).' He (p) said, 'Do you not know that every nation has marriage? Get away from me!'" He said, "I never saw him walk with him after that day."

[20909] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "For every nation there is marriage with which they protect themselves from fornication."

[20911] 4. A man said about Imam al-Sadiq (p), "I asked him about a man who was falsely accusing a man of the pre-Islamic Arabs. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, 'He is to be punished.' I said, "Punished!" He (p) said, 'Yes, surely that is what will reach the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp).'"

# *Chapter 74*

## The Prohibition of Oppression

Oppression has many different manifestations and dimensions and encompasses any kind of infringement on someone's rights, including rights of the self, others, and our Creator. Due to the strong language opposing all forms of oppression and the stance of the family of the Prophet (pbut) against the tyrants of their eras, we have a responsibility as believers to uphold their practice and never come close to oppressing others.

[20913] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Be mindful that you do not speak a word of oppression, even if your tribe wanted you to do so."

[20914] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Satan (Iblis) says to his soldiers, 'Plant between them envy and oppression, for they are considered by Allah to be equivalent to polytheism.'"

[20915] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The fastest evil act to be punished is oppression."

[20916] 5. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The righteousness for which one receives the fastest reward is obedience to Allah, and the evil for which one will receives punishment fastest is oppression. And it is shameful for one to try to change others' defects that they are blind to within themselves, that they reproach people for things from which they cannot refrain, or that they hurt someone sitting next to them in a gathering by prying into that which does not concern them."

[20917] 6. In his last will and testament to his companions, Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "And do not oppress each other, for such actions are not the attributes of the righteous. For Allah will turn the person's oppression against them, and Allah will champion the one who faced the other's oppression. And one whom Allah champions will always win."

[20918] 7. In the Prophet's last will and testament to Ali (p) he said, "O Ali! There are four things punished most swiftly: a person to whom you have done good and they repay you with evil, a person against whom you harbor no ill will but who harbors ill will against you, a person with whom you make a covenant and fulfil your part but they betray you, and a person who maintains ties of kinship with their relatives even though the relatives sever them."

[20919] 8. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "If a mountain were to oppress another mountain, then Allah would demolish it. The act of evil that brings on the fastest punishment is to oppress others, and the fastest rewards for righteousness happen for obedience to Allah."

[20920] 9. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The act that receives the fastest punishment is oppression (infringing upon others)."

[20921] 10. The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, "If a mountain were to oppress (infringe) on another mountain, Allah would demolish the one that infringed."

[20922] 11. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The fastest punishment is given to those who oppress."

[20923] 12. A man challenged some of the Hashimites to spar, but then he refrained. Imam Ali (p) said to him. "What prevented you?" He said, "He was a warrior of the Arabs; I feared that he might defeat me." Imam Ali (p) said, "But he was malicious toward you. If you were to fight him, you would have killed him, for if a

mountain were to infringe upon another mountain, the infringer would be demolished."

# *Chapter 75*

## The Abhorrence of Boasting

The transient nature of this world is meant to serve as a reminder of our servitude to our Lord and Creator. Servitude through rites, such as prostration and supplication, is meant to cultivate a sense of need for God and a rejection of attachment to all other things. Yet, society consistently channels us to be in competition with others, particularly in areas such as wealth, lineage, and academics. Humility, through a remembrance of our mortality, will shatter any desire to boast with any ounce of arrogance.

[20924] 1. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) said, "I am surprised at the person who is conceited and boastful, because only yesterday they were a drop of semen and tomorrow they will be a decaying carcass."

[20925] 2. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The problem with emphasizing lineage is if one were to become boastful and conceited."

[20926] 3. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The problem with lineage is boastfulness."

[20927] 4. A man came to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) and said, "O Messenger of Allah! I am so-and-so, the son of so-and-so," until he named nine generations of his forebears. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Surely, you, who are the tenth of the lineage you mentioned, will be in hell."

[20928] 5. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "I am surprised at the conceited one who hides behind their lineage, for they were created from semen, then return to the earth as a decaying carcass, and in between that time they do not know what to do with themselves."

[20929] 6. In the Prophet's last will and testament to Imam Ali (p), he said, "O Ali! The ill effect of lineage is to become boastful." He then said, "O Ali! Islam did away with the vainglory of pre-Islamic times and the boastfulness of its forebears. Surely, humankind is from Adam, Adam is from sand, and the most gracious of you to Allah are the most pious of you."

[20930] 7. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Three actions are from pre-Islamic times: boasting about one's lineage, finding fault in another's ancestry, and praying to the stars for rain."

[20931] 8. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Two men boasted about their ancestry to Imam Ali (p), to which he said. 'Are you proud of decayed carcasses and souls that are in hell? If you have an intellect then you will be well-mannered, and if you have piety then you will be gracious. Otherwise, a donkey is better than you, and you are better than no one.'"

[20933] 10. Imam Ali (p) said, "What is it with the son of Adam (humankind) and conceit! Do they not know that they start as a drop of semen and end as a rancid carcass? They neither sustain themselves nor have they any power to control their own death."

# *Chapter 76*

## The Abhorrence of a Harsh Heart

In Islamic spirituality, the heart is symbolic of the internal nature of humans, a vessel which can be purified and gain knowledge of God or a vessel which is shackled by sins and vice, thus distanced from the Creator. Therefore, it is important to pay heed to the teachings of our Messenger and his infallible family to perfect the heart, so that it illuminates angelic qualities and characteristics.

[20934] 1. Amir al-Muminin Imam Ali (p) said, "There are two types of groups of companions: those who are satanic, and those who are angelic. As for the angelic group, it is one of kindness and understanding. As for the satanic, it is one of heedlessness and harshness."

[20937] 4. In the Prophet's last will and testament to Imam Ali (p), he stated, "O Ali! there are four attributes that indicate deviation: the eyes do not tear, the hearts become harsh, one has false hope in the future, and one wants to stay forever on this earth."

[20938] 5. Imam Ali (p) said, "The eyes do not tear because of a hardened heart, and hearts do not harden except as a result of all of the sins one commits."

[20939] 6. The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, "When one cannot shed a tear, it is a sign of deviation, a harsh-heart, vigilance for worldly gains, and insistence on sinning."

# *Chapter 77*

## The Proscription against Oppression

The Prophet of God is the beacon of perfection and an example for all believers when it comes to his etiquette and character, particularly in a time where we consistently see the oppression and injustice of people everywhere. In the early days, in Mecca, the Prophet sought to be the supporter of the most vulnerable in the classical Arabian community: slaves, the poor, and women. Naturally, walking in the Prophet's footsteps requires us to seek reform of our societal structures by eradicating the oppression of all.

[20940] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There is no act of oppression greater than the one in which there is no aid except Allah."

[20941] 2. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Beware of oppression, for it is the darkness of the Day of Judgment."

[20942] 3. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "There is not one act of oppression that someone commits, except that the same oppression of themselves and their wealth will afflict them. As for the oppression that one perpetrated against the right of Allah upon them, Allah will forgive them if they repent."

[20943] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who perpetrates an act of oppression will be inflicted with the same in themselves, their wealth, or their children."

[20945] 6. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "When Ali ibn al-Husayn was dying, he held me to his chest and said, 'My son! I give the advice that my father gave me before he died, which was the same

advice his father gave him on his death bed. He said, "My son! Beware of oppressing someone who has no one to come to their aid except Allah."""

[20946] 7. Imam Ali (p) said, "One who fears punishment refrains from oppressing people."

[20947] 8. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who wakes up without the intention to oppress anyone, Allah will forgive them the sins they commit on that day, as long as they do not shed anyone's blood or unrightfully take from the wealth of an orphan."

[20948] 9. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, no one who has committed oppression will receive a good reward. For surely, the oppressed takes from the religion of the oppressor more than the oppressor takes from the wealth of the one whom they oppressed." He then said, "One who does evil unto others should not denounce evil when it afflicts them."

[20949] 10. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Oppression in this world is the darkness of the hereafter (a reference to the darkness of hellfire)."

[20950] 11. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, Allah Almighty states, 'By My Pride and Majesty, I neither answer the supplication of the one who was oppressed in retribution for their own oppression of someone, nor someone who has perpetrated a similar oppressive act.'"

[20951] 12. Zayd ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn (p) said, "The oppressed person takes more from the religion [meaning the oppressor's good deeds are stripped from him and are awarded to those he oppressed] of the oppressor than the oppressor takes from the worldly possessions of the oppressed."

[20952] 13. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who commits an oppressive act against someone, Allah will afflict him, his children, or his progeny with the same oppression."

[20953] 14. Imam Ali (p) said, "The greatest of sins is to unrightfully take from the wealth of a Muslim."

[20954] 15. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Allah Almighty despises the wealthy oppressor."

[20955] 16. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Allah Almighty says, 'My anger multiplies against the one who oppresses those who have no one to come to their aid except Me.'"

# *Chapter 78*

## The Obligation to Compensate People for Usurped Possessions as a Condition of Repentance and If Unable Then to Seek Forgiveness from Allah

Oppression can come in various forms, the first being the oppression of our own selves. For every act of sin and transgression, we are oppressing our own souls and distancing ourselves from our primary human mandate, which is to be the best servant of God we can. When we do so, we must turn back to God in repentance. Similarly, when we oppress those around us, we have an obligation to seek the forgiveness of those we harmed and to fulfil their rights to receive God's mercy and grace.

[20957] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Injustice is of three types: Injustice that Allah forgives, injustice that Allah does not forgive, and injustice that Allah does not leave undone. As for the injustice that Allah forgives, it is the injustice of a person towards himself in his relationship with Allah. As for the injustice that Allah does not forgive, it is *shirk* (association of partners with Allah). And as for the injustice that Allah does not leave undone, it is debt among people."

[20959] 3. A man said to Imam al-Baqir (p), "I have been governor since the time of [the Umayyad tyrant] al-Hajjaj; would my repentance ever be accepted?" [The Imam was silent]. He then repeated the question. Imam al-Baqir (p) said "Not until you compensate each person for what is rightfully theirs."

[20961] 5. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "A person. who oppresses another, and that person dies before they were able to ask

them for forgiveness, should seek forgiveness from Allah for it is penance for their actions."

[20962] 6. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "One who unjustly takes from the wealth of a believer, Allah will not reward them for their obedience and righteous actions until they reimburse the person."

# *Chapter 79*

## The Criterion for the Repentance of Those Who Cause the Deviation of Others Being Returning Them to the Path of Truth

Our actions and words are particularly important to our future success or detriment, and thus it is necessary to be cautious every moment of our lives. After any act of transgression, a believer may be remorseful and seek forgiveness from God, yet many of our interactions will have influenced others to also fall into sin and vice, for which we may be primarily responsible.

[20963] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "In ancient times, there was a man who sought materialistic gain through permissible means, and he was unsuccessful. He then used prohibited means and was still unsuccessful. Satan then came to him and said, 'Would you like me to direct you to something that will increase your worldly wealth and your followers?' He responded, 'Yes.' Satan said, 'Make up your own religion and tell people to follow it.' The man did so, people responded to him, obeyed him, and he was successful in what he sought from this world. He then thought to himself, 'I do not foresee that God will accept my repentance for my transgression of innovating a false religion and calling people to follow it, except if I correct my mistake by confessing to my followers.' Therefore, he did so, telling them, 'I convinced you to follow a false religion. I made it all up.' to which they responded, 'You lie; it is indeed the truth. However, you have doubts in your own religion.' When he saw this, he decided to chain himself to a pole by his neck, and he said, 'I will not unlock the chain until Allah Almighty forgives me. Allah

Almighty revealed to one of His prophets, "Say to this man, 'By My Pride, if you supplicate to Me until you are shredded to pieces [by wild animals], I will not respond to you until you return those of your followers who have already died and they revert.'"""

# *Chapter 80*

## The Prohibition against Accepting Oppression, Aiding the Oppressor, and Giving the Oppressor Excuses

The struggle to attain more power and authority consistently drowns us and we often dominate others, even those in our own homes. God presents the example of the ancient villain, Pharaoh, in the Quran, who claims power and sets up himself as a god over people, demanding absolute obedience and servitude. Historically, it has been the practice of humans to seek power in every facet of life, a dangerous quality that has been the cause of so much tyranny in the world. Today, we not only see this on a governmental level, but in the workplace, in our mosques, and even in our homes when we are oppressive to our spouses and children.

[20965] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The oppressor, those who aid them, and those who accept the oppression are all partners in the oppression."

[20966] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who excuses an oppressor for their oppression, Allah will place an oppressor over them to oppress them as well. If they then supplicate, Allah will not answer and Allah will not reward them for being oppressed."

[20967] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) advised his companions, "And beware of helping someone against an oppressed Muslim lest they supplicate against you and Allah answers their prayer. For our father, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, 'The dua of an oppressed Muslim is answered.' Therefore, help each other, for our father, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) used to say, 'The help of a

Muslim is righteous and greater in reward than the fasting of a month and itikaf in the Holy Kabah.'"

[20968] 4. In the Prophet's last will and testament to Imam Ali (p), he said, "O Ali! The evilest of humans is the one who sold their hereafter for this world, and eviler than that is the one who sold their hereafter for the world of another instead of God."

[20969] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who supports an oppressor in their oppression of an oppressed person, Allah will be angry at them until they refrain from that support."

[20970] 6. Imam Ali (p) said, "There are three signs of an oppressor: they oppress the one above them through disobedience, those under them by overpowering them, and they boast about their oppression to people."

# *Chapter 81*

## The Prohibition against Following Whims That Conflict with Islamic Law

As mentioned in the previous section, our attachment to and love of this world often causes us to become preoccupied with the temporary and neglect the permanent, as in the example of Pharaoh, who abandoned tomorrow for the fleeting desire of today. Our desires at any given moment can cloud our judgment and reason, leading to acts of sin and transgression, which in turn lead to a hereafter of regret. Reminding ourselves that our physical desires for food, sex, power, or sleep last such a brief period is among the most important ways to train our souls.

[20971] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Beware of your whims (desires) just as you beware of your enemies. For there is no greater danger to people than following their whims and the problems resulting from their own tongues."

[20972] 2. Imam Ali (p) said. "I fear only two things for you: following your whims and procrastination. As for following your whims, it keeps you from the truth, and as for procrastination, it makes you forget the hereafter."

[20973] 3. Imam Ali (p) said, "Avoid the easy climb to a higher status if the way down is tough. Do not leave the self to its whims, for its whims are to its detriment, and leaving the self to its desires will hurt it. However, abstaining from the self's whims is its medication."

# *Chapter 82*

## The Obligation to Admit One's Sins and That One Deserves Punishment to Allah

Humility in front of the Lord of the Worlds and seeking to draw close to Him is the way to every bit of success in this world and the next. We make decisions daily which cause us to be forgetful and negligent of our Creator, and so we need to consistently return to Him, admitting our failure to be thankful and, at the same time, our desire to have our hearts emptied of all sin. To fully be repentant, we must show sincerity in our pleading to God for our actions and deeds.

[20974] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "I swear, by Allah, that the only one to escape sin is the one who admits it. Regret is sufficient repentance."

[20975] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "No, by Allah! He wants nothing more than for people to have two characteristics: that they give Him his due right for all that He has blessed them with, and He, in return, will increase their prosperity; and that they admit to their sins, and He will forgive them."

[20976] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, by Allah! A worshipper will not receive forgiveness for a sin if they persist in sinning. However, a worshipper will receive forgiveness for their sin if they admit to it [before Allah]."

[20977] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "If a person commits a sin and realizes that Allah saw it, then Allah, if He so pleases, will either punish or forgive them. He may forgive them even if they do not

ask for forgiveness [they may repent but not ask for forgiveness for that sin]."

[20978] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, Allah loves for the worshipper to seek repentance for the greater sins, and He hates for the worshipper to belittle the lesser sins."

Theologians have long debated the difference between the greater and lesser sins, but for our purpose as believers, it is important for us to not see the weight of the sins, but instead remind ourselves of the One we are disobeying. In other words, if we are serious about keeping a high state of spirituality, we should see every sin as a greater sin.

[20980] 7. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Allah forgave a Bedouin with two words that he supplicated, when he said, 'O Allah! If you torture me, then it is because I am deserving of it, and if you forgive me, then it because it is your place to do so.' Therefore, Allah forgave him."

# *Chapter 83*

## The Obligation to Regret Sins

We are prone to lapsing and disobeying God's commands many times in our lives, but God has kept open the door of repentance for us. There are not many things more beloved to the All-Merciful than seeing His servants turn back to Him in regret, seeking atonement for their sins.

[20982] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One whose good deeds make them joyous and their ill deeds make them feel bad is a believer."

[20983] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, a person commits a sin and through it Allah places them in heaven." [The narrator asked], "Allah places them in heaven for committing a sin?" He (p) said, "Yes, for they sin and become weary and fearful, hating themselves for the transgression. As a result, Allah places them in heaven!"

[20984] 3. Imam Ali (p) said, "Regret for an evil act drives one to refrain from it."

[20985] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There is not one worshipper who regrets a sin after they commit it, except that Allah will forgive them that sin even before they ask for forgiveness, and there is not one worshipper upon whom Allah has bestowed His blessings and they knew that they [the blessings] were from Allah, except that Allah will forgive them before they thank Him [Allah]."

[20986] 5. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Regret is repentance."

[20987] 3. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Regret suffices as repentance."

[20988] 3. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) said, "If a person has these four attributes, then their faith is complete and their sins will be removed: one who keeps their promises to people, one who is truthful with people, one who is ashamed of every ugly act before Allah and people, and one who has good food manners with their family."

# *Chapter 84*

## The Obligation to Hide One's Sins and the Prohibition against Exposing Them

Our path to God is often an individual one that requires deep commitment, focus, and diligence. And though we use our families and communities as a stepping stone to reach spiritual success, our accounting in the world beyond this one is not a communal effort but an individual task. Thus, the good deeds that we do as well as the sins that we commit are a form of either spiritual growth or detriment to our own souls. And we should not be so proud as to publicize our good deeds, for they are meant for God's sake. Similarly, we should never publicize our transgressions of God's boundaries to anyone but Him.

[20990] 1. Imam al-Rida (p) said, "One who hides their good deed multiplies it to seventy good deeds, one who announces their ill-deeds will be disappointed, and one who hides an ill-deed will be forgiven."

# *Chapter 85*

## The Obligation to Ask for Forgiveness for One's Sins and to Do So within Seven Hours

Remorse and regret have a lifespan, and for many, the time between sinning and seeking forgiveness is long and drawn-out, so that we do not consider the sins of our youth until our old age. Thus, the incentive, as offered within these traditions of the Prophet and his family (pbut), shows that immediate seeking of forgiveness of our sins indicates a true turning back to God, full of humility and sincerity.

[20992] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who does a bad deed has seven hours of the day before it is recorded against them. However, it will not be recorded against them if they say three times, 'I seek forgiveness from Allah the Only God, the Living, the Sustainer, and I repent to Him.'"

[20994] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "If a person sins, they are given time to repent from noon to nighttime. If they ask for forgiveness in that time span, the sin will not be recorded."

[20995] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "If the believer sins, Allah will give them seven hours to repent. If they ask Allah for forgiveness, their sin will not be recorded. However, if they do not repent within seven hours, then their sin will be recorded."

[20998] 8. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The Messenger of Allah was asked about the best worshippers, and he said, 'They are those who, if they do good, are happy; if they do ill, they repent; if they are admonished, [they] are grateful; if they are tested in life, [they] are patient; and if they are made angry, [they] forgive.'"

[21001] 11. The Messenger (pbuh&hp) said, "For every ailment there is a cure, and the cure for sins is repentance."

[21003] 13. A man wrote to Imam al-Jawad (p), "Teach me something to say, so that when I say it, I will be with you in this world and in the hereafter." He said, "He wrote to me in his own handwriting, which I recognized, 'Recite i*nna anzalnahu* [the chapter of al-Qadr] abundantly and moisten your lips with asking for forgiveness from Allah.'"

[21004] 14. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Tuba [a tree in heaven] will be awarded to the one whose book of deeds on the Day of Judgment shows that they asked for forgiveness for every sin."

[21006] 16. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The keeper of the book of deeds for those who will receive it in their right hand has authority over the keeper of the book of deeds for those of the left. Therefore, if a person does a bad deed, the one on the right says to the one on the left hand, 'Do not rush! Give them seven hours! If the seven hours pass and they do not ask for forgiveness write, "How little is this worshipper's shame."'"

[21007] 17. Imam Ali (p) said, "Wear the fragrance of repentance, and do not be exposed by the stench of your sins."

[21008] 18. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Those who have these four attributes are in Allah's Greater Light (the grace of Allah): one whose protection is to testify that there is no god except Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp), one who when struck by a calamity says, 'Surely, we are from Allah and to Him we shall return,' one who when struck with good says, 'All thanks is to Allah, the Lord of the worlds,' and one who when they commit a sin say, 'I ask forgiveness from Allah and to Him I repent.'"

# *Chapter 86*

## The Obligation to Repent of All Sins and Decide Not to Ever Repeat Them

Among the most beautiful verses of the Quran is when God advises the believers that He loves those who seek repentance.[62] In order to seek repentance, we must be sinners that have committed a crime in front of our Master, have decided that we were in the wrong, and made a firm commitment to turn back to Him. And God, out of His abundant mercy, compassion, and care for us, says that He loves us. Our relationship with God often has a basis in fear, yet the door of His Mercy is consistently open, because He wants us to be successful in this world and the next.

[21009] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "If a worshipper repents with true repentance, Allah will love them and will hide their sins in this world and in the hereafter." Someone asked the Imam, "How does He hide them?" The Imam said, "He makes his two recording angels forget what they recorded of their sins, He reveals to their limbs to not expose their sins, and He reveals to the various places of the earth not to expose the sins they committed in those places. As a result, they will meet their Lord on the Day of Judgment, and nothing will testify to their sins."

[21014] 6. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "Surely, Allah Almighty is more elated with the repentance of his worshipper than a man who lost his camel and his horse in the darkness of the night and then found them. For Allah is much happier with the repentance of His worshipper than that man at finding his animals."

62. For example, Quran 2:222.

[21015] 7. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, Allah Almighty is elated by the repentance of his faithful worshipper if they repent, just as one of you is elated when you find something that you lost."

[21016] 8. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "The likeness of the repenter of sin is the one who is sinless. And the likeness of the persistent sinner, who continues to ask for repentance, is that of a mocker."

[21018] 9. Allah revealed to the Prophet David (p) that, "If my faithful worshipper sins one sin repents from that sin, and when they are reminded of it feels ashamed, then I will forgive them, make the two recording angels forget that sin, change it to a good deed, and I will not mind, and I am the Most Merciful."

[21019] 10. Imam Ali (p) said, "Allah accepts the repentance of the one who repents, their limbs are commanded not to testify, the different locations of the earth are commanded to keep their sins a secret, and the recording angels are made to forget what they recorded against them."

[21020] 11. The Messenger of Allah (p) said, "Verily, Allah has an excess from His sustenance, and He grants it to whomever He wishes from His creation. Every dawn, Allah awaits the repentance of the sinner from the night before, so that He may forgive them. And every day at sunset, Allah awaits the repentance of the sinner in the daytime so that He may forgive them."

[21021] 13. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The likeness of a believer to Allah Almighty is the likeness of a close angel, and the believer is greater in status to Allah. There is nothing more beloved to Allah Almighty than a faithful repenting man and a faithful repenting woman."

[21023] 15. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There is no good in this world except for two people: a person who increases in goodness every day, and a person who seeks forgiveness for their sins through

repentance. And how can they repent? By God, even if they prostrate themselves until their neck breaks, God will not accept their repentance except through our guardianship, the People of the House."

This tradition is of importance because people may read and practice it incorrectly. Many people believe that loving and believing in the Imams of the prophetic household is a direct pass to entering paradise, when, in fact, the tradition speaks more to the importance of belief and conviction as a prerequisite to attaining the mercy and bounty of God. Our firm belief [*marifah*], in God, His Messenger, and the Imams allows us to attain forgiveness truly and sincerely from our Lord because we understand the One Whom we are worshipping.

# *Chapter 87*

## The Obligation and Criteria for Sincerity of Repentance

In the post-modern world, where technological advancement surrounds us, it is easy to have multiple personalities, particularly when spending so much of our life behind a device like a phone or computer. We can easily change our physical appearance and shift our identity. But this disingenuous nature of our sense of self does not help in our spiritual development. Having an appearance of piety for our community means nothing if we do not show that same level of love or conviction in God when we are with Him in private and seeking solace. Hundreds of reports from the Holy Household (pbut) emphasize a sense of sincerity and commitment in our relationship with God, particularly with a demonstration of repentance. The movement of my tongue is worthless if I do not truly feel remorse in my heart.

[21026] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "A true repentance is for a person to be the same or even better inside as they are on the outside."

[21027] 3. Al-Saduq said, "And he narrated that the true repentance is for one to repent from a sin and intend never to repeat it."

[21028] 4. From the Commander of the Faithful, peace be upon him, it is narrated that a person said in his presence, "I seek forgiveness from Allah." He said, "May your mother be bereaved! Do you know what seeking forgiveness is? Seeking forgiveness is a degree of the exalted ones, and it is a name that applies to six meanings. The first is regret for what has passed. The second is the determination to never return to it. The third is to fulfill the rights of the creation

until you meet Allah, the Exalted, with a clear conscience and no burden upon you. The fourth is to intentionally fulfill every obligation that you have neglected. The fifth is to intentionally melt away the flesh that has grown from unlawful gain with sorrow, until the skin adheres to the bone and new flesh grows between them. The sixth is to make the body taste the pain of obedience as you made it taste the sweetness of disobedience. Then, you say, 'I seek forgiveness from Allah.'"

# *Chapter 88*

## The Recommendation to Fast, Wash, and Pray for Repentance on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

Life is about taking the necessary steps to channel our belief and action into growth. We cannot find true bliss if we believe in God, His prophets, His books, and His representatives on earth, but that does not include a call for action, physically doing His required and recommended good deeds. Through the physical action and movements of prayers, and abstaining from food and drink while fasting, for example, our bodies become weak so that our souls are elevated.

[21030] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) explained Allah's statement in the Holy Quran, "Repent to Allah with sincere repentance."[63] He (p) said, "It means to fast Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday."

[21031] 2. Imam Ali (p) said, "I would not be bothered with a sin if I was given the opportunity to repent for it by praying two cycles of prayer [*rakats*]."

63. The Quran 66:8 (AQQ).

# *Chapter 89*

## The Permissibility and Correctness of Renewing One's Repentance When Meeting Criteria, Even If One Repeatedly Contradicts One's Own Repentance

When we fail in our duties and responsibilities to others, such as in our families or workplace, we tend to break the trust of those around us. Though we may ask for forgiveness or give a commitment that we will do better, eventually our words no longer hold any value, which is dangerous to our communal relationships. But for our Ever-Merciful Lord, no matter how many times we fail in our responsibilities to Him, if we fulfil the prerequisites to repentance, He will always accept us.

[21033] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "O Muhammad ibn Muslim! If a believer repents, they will receive forgiveness for some of their sins. Therefore, they must work hard to receive forgiveness for the remaining sins. Surely, this is a mission that only people of faith achieve." Someone asked the Imam, "What if they return to sinning after seeking repentance and forgiveness from the sins and then they seek repentance again?" He (p) responded, "O Mohammad ibn Muslim! Do you think that if a faithful worshipper were to regret their sin, ask for forgiveness, and repent, that Allah would not accept their repentance?" They then asked the Imam (p), "But what if they were to repeatedly sin, repent, and ask for forgiveness?" He (p) responded, "Every time, the believer returns to [Allah] asking for forgiveness and repentance, Allah will grant them forgiveness. Surely, Allah is forgiving and merciful. He accepts repentance and pardons. Therefore, beware that the believers do not despair of the mercy of Allah."

[21035] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "There is not one believer that is not faced with a sin that they abandon for a while only to return to its grasp, and that is what Allah means when He states, 'except the sins that he falls back into (*limam*).' I also asked about where Allah Almighty states, "Those that avoid the greater sins and obscenity except those sins for which they repented and returned to after a while." He (p) responded, "The obscenity here is fornication and thievery. The sins that a person abandons and then returns to after a while only to repent again and Allah forgives them."

[21036] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) explained Allah Almighty's statement, "Repent to Allah with true repentance." He said, "It is the sin that he never repeats again." His companions said, "And which of us has not sinned only to sin again?" He (p) responded: "O Abu Muhammad! Allah loves His worshippers that face temptation and repent repeatedly."

# *Chapter 90*

## The Recommendation to Remember Sin and Ask for Forgiveness Every Time One Remembers

We should never feel satisfied with our remembrance of God or our seeking forgiveness. Even though we have been taught to remain confident in God's Mercy and acceptance of our repentance, if we ever recall our past sins or ugly actions, we should be quick to ask our Lord for forgiveness again, in humility, for He deserves our obedience and worship. If we consistently hold ourselves accountable, we will always recognize that we have more effort to give to seek the pleasure of our Lord.

[21038]1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, the believer remembers their sin after twenty years until their Lord forgives them, and they will receive forgiveness. As for the disbeliever, they forget their sin within an hour [of sinning]."

[21039] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The believer sins a sin, remembers it after twenty years, asks for forgiveness for it, and they are forgiven. Surely, there is no other reason that they remember it except that they may receive pardon for it. As for the disbeliever, they sin and forget that they sinned within the hour."

[21041] 4. Someone asked Imam al-Sadiq (p) about the concept of luring [*istidraj*]. He (p) responded, "This refers to the worshipper who commits a sin, is whispered to, and Allah gives them renewed blessing, which stops them from seeking forgiveness. In this way they are lured without being aware."

The concept of *istidraj* is important for any believer because we must fear God's wrath yet, at the same time, be hopeful of His reward. Sometimes, we can be so distant from God that He continuously blesses us to keep us away from His remembrance. For many people, when they are having trials or tribulations, they are still forgetful of God. We see this in the examples of people like Pharaoh who was consistently given the benefits of this world, so that it consumed him so that he would never care to remember his Creator.

# *Chapter 91*

## The Recommendation to Take Advantage of Opportunities to Do Good Deeds and to Be the First to Do So When Possible

Our time in this world is fleeting, so we must be mindful of the opportunities that present themselves. This refers to both opportunities in this world and those that contribute to our success in the next world. We live in a fast-paced world, which seduces us with things which are not always important or valuable. In the Quran, God swears "By time!"[64] to show its sacredness and continues by maintaining that "man is in loss"[65] and thus negligent of our responsibility to the current time and moment.

[21042] 1. In the Prophet's last will and testament to Imam Ali (p), he said, "O Ali, take advantage of four things before four other things occur: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your sufficiency before your poverty, your life before your death."

[21044] 3. Imam Ali (p) said, "Opportunities pass just as the clouds. Therefore, take advantage of the opportunities to do good."

[21045] 4. Imam Ali (p) said, "Missing an opportunity leads to grief."

64. The Quran 102:1 (AQQ).
65. The Quran 102:2 (AQQ).

# *Chapter 92*

## The Recommendation to Repeatedly Ask for Repentance and Forgiveness Every Day and Night Even without Sinning and That It Is Mandatory If One Sins

Asking for forgiveness is a symbol of servitude to our Creator. God, as we are aware, does not need our worship, but we need to always obey Him. We are the servants and slaves of God, and in recognition of His magnanimity toward us, we prostate and supplicate in awe of Him. This is why we see the examples of God's representatives on earth often turning pale when performing the ablution or standing in preparation for prayer. In addition, our seeking repentance is evidence to God that we care about fulfilling our responsibilities and at least are trying to seek His pleasure.

[21048] 2. The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said, "For every disease there is a cure, and the cure for sins is to seek forgiveness."

[21050] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Surely, the Messenger of Allah would repent seventy times a day without committing a single sin."

[21053] 7. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "It used to be said, 'The most beloved of worshippers to Allah is the righteous repenter.'"

# *Chapter 93*

## The Correctness of Repentance and Conversion to Islam at the End of Life Even at the Soul's Last Moments as It Leaves the Body (from the Throat) before One Sees the Afterlife

We can seek forgiveness from God until the last moment in this *dunya*, as noted in the traditions that follow. This should not be an excuse to postpone our repentance as we have noted earlier, but instead should cause us to appreciate the mercy and compassion of our Creator. Many people in the past procrastinated in seeking God's pardon, and those in the future will undoubtedly procrastinate, too. In the Quran, God presents the example of the Pharaoh who seeks forgiveness at the very last moment of his life, yet is rejected, contradicting this point. However, as the Ahl al-Bayt have told us, the Pharaoh's pardon was rejected because he had already been exposed to the afterlife. For a believer, the opportunity is always present, and we should repent at once upon committing any sin.

[21055] 1. Allah Almighty said to Adam (p), "I made it so that I forgive whomever of your progeny commits a sin and then asks for forgiveness," and then said, "I gave them repentance and simplified it for them so that they have an opportunity to repent until their soul reaches their throat (in its final stage of leaving the body)." He (Adam) said, "O Allah! You are sufficient for me."

[21056] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "If the soul reaches this (pointing at his throat), there will be no repentance for the one with

knowledge of the truth, while there will be repentance for the one ignorant of the truth."

In Islamic theology, there is a discussion with regards to those who may not have had access to the pure truth of God, His Book, His Prophet, and the Imams, and thus for them, out of God's justice, He will not punish them for their failure to know.

[21057] 3. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "One who repents a year before their death (and he stopped). Surely, a year is too long! One who repents a month before their death. A month is too long! One who repents by one Friday [a week] before their death, Allah will accept their repentance. One Friday is too long! One who repents a day before their death, Allah will accept their repentance. A day is too long! One who repents before they see the afterlife, Allah will accept their repentance."

[21059] 5. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "When Allah gave Satan what He gave him of power, Adam said, 'O Allah! You posted Satan against my children and made him flow through them like blood flows through veins, and You gave him what You gave him. What then have You given my children (to protect themselves from him)?' Allah said, 'For you and your children the penalty for one bad deed is one, and the reward for one righteous deed will be tenfold of the same deed.' He said, 'O Allah! Give me more.' Allah said, 'The opportunity for repentance will be open until the soul reaches the throat (the final exit point to the afterlife).' He said, 'O Allah! Give me more.' Allah said, 'I will forgive and will not concern Myself with anyone's perception.' He said, 'That is sufficient.'"

[21060] 6. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "One who repents a year before their death, Allah will forgive them, Surely, a year is too long! One who repents a month before their death, Allah will forgive them. A month is too long! One who repents by one day before their death, Allah will accept their repentance. One day is too long! One who repents an hour before their death, Allah will accept

their repentance. An hour is too long! One who repents by the time their soul reaches this area (pointing to his throat), Allah will accept their repentance."

[21062] 8. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) called upon a Jewish man on his deathbed to testify with the two shahadas. He did so and died. He then commanded the companions to wash, enshroud, and pray over him. He (pbuh&hp) said, "All thanks to Allah that He saved one person from hellfire through me."

# *Chapter 94*

## The Recommendation to Ask for Forgiveness before Dawn

Those who take their religion seriously should often hold themselves to account, checking themselves to seek forgiveness for their bad deeds and recall and multiply the good deeds, so there is continuous growth. Our days should begin and end with God's remembrance, and we will see that everything in between will be a source of blessing for us.

[21067] 2. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Surely if Allah the Almighty sees a village whose inhabitants have been sinning excessively, and three of its residents are believers, then Allah Almighty will call to them, 'O sinners! Were it not for those believers among you, who treat each other lovingly by My Majesty, who make My earth and mosques thrive with their prayers, and those who out of reverence for Me ask for My forgiveness before dawn, I would have brought upon you My torturous punishment without concern.'"

As noted in this narration, God facilitates unique blessings for being in the presence of believers, so imagine if we could rise to the level of being those believers that God speaks about and who are a source of mercy for others!

[21068] 3. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "One who is offended by their own bad deeds and is pleased with their righteous deeds is a believer."

# *Chapter 95*

## The Obligation to Make Up Today for Yesterday's Missed Opportunities without Delay

Every day is a new opportunity to grow, mold, and cultivate ourselves to make the biggest difference we can. We only have a brief time in this fleeting world, so we should seek to improve every facet of our life, to reach ultimate perfection in all phases. We should seek to be better today than we were yesterday, and if we commit to that and seek God's help, we will start to see incremental changes in our life. The process may often be challenging and tedious, but it will be rewarding to traverse on the pathway to our Lord.

[21070] 2. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "When the daylight comes, it says, 'O son of Adam! Do good deeds on this day of yours and I will testify for you on the Day of Judgment, for I have neither come to you before nor will I return.' When the nighttime comes, it says the same."

[21071] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "If you can avoid knowing what people think of you that would be best, and do not worry about being disreputable among people as long as you are praised by Allah."

[21072] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The cheated one is the one who cheated themselves out of their life, hour by hour."

# *Chapter 96*

## The Obligation to Monitor One's Self, Hold It Accountable for Its Daily Actions, to Thank Allah for One's Good Deeds, and Amend One's Bad Deeds

Many reports from the Prophet and his family (pbut) emphasize the importance of holding ourselves to account, and this is a constant theme within the text. Accounting means to reflect and analyze our deeds, daily if possible, and do our best to improve them, while weeding out and eliminating any quality or characteristic that is a hindrance to our spiritual growth and development. Our soul needs nurturing, just like our physical bodies do, and one of the ways to exercise the soul is to hold it to account and work toward self-improvement.

[21074] 1. Imam al-Askari (p) said, "The one who does not hold themselves accountable for their actions every day is not of us [the Ahl al-Bayt]. If they do good deeds, then they should ask Allah to help them do better, and if they do bad deeds, then they should ask Allah for forgiveness and Allah will accept their repentance."

[21080] 7. The Prophet (pbuh&hp) said in his last will and testament, "O Abu Dharr! Hold yourself accountable for your deeds before you are held accountable, for then your evaluation will be easier on you on the Day of Judgment. And weigh your deeds [good deeds versus bad] before they are weighed for you, and prepare for the greater exposition, the day that everything will be exposed to Allah. O Abu Dharr! A person is not considered pious unless they hold themselves

accountable for their deeds more strictly than others, so that they know whether the source of their food, drink, and clothing is lawful or prohibited. O Abu Dharr! One who is uncaring about their source of income, Allah will not care about them entering hellfire."

[21082] 9. Imam Ali al-Rida (p) said, "Hold yourself accountable before you are held to account, weigh your deeds before they are weighed for you, and prepare for the greater exposition."

[21086] 13. Imam Zayn al-Abidin (p) said, "The angel that records the worshipper's deeds writes in his book of deeds, 'Have hope [in Allah, by asking Him] for your actions to be righteous ones from beginning to end [meaning throughout the action and in both the daytime and nighttime], and Allah will forgive what is in between.'"

# *Chapter 97*

## The Obligation to Be More Conservative as One Ages, Especially over Age Forty

In any field, a greater sense of responsibility comes with more experience. Similarly, as we grow, age, and experience the nature of this world, we must be more careful how we act, with whom we interact, and the words that we speak. It is irrational to suggest that our behaviors or mannerisms should not develop as we get older and have more wisdom.

[21087] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The worshipper has some time in their affairs [to mend their bad deeds] up until the age of forty. If they reach age forty, Allah Almighty reveals to His two recording angels: 'I have given My worshipper a prolonged life. Therefore, be stricter and more conscientious and record every deed, be it small or great, little or big.'"

[21088] 2. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "If a person becomes forty, it is said to them, 'Be careful, for you are not excused. For [the truth is that] the forty-year-old is not more worthy of being vigilant [of their actions] than the twenty-year-old. For the one who seeks to deviate both is one [Satan] and he is restless. Therefore, conduct yourself with the terror of the hereafter in mind, and refrain from vain talk.'"

[21089] 3. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Gain rewards for yourself in this world through good deeds. Do so [at once], in times of health before you become sick, while you are still strong before you become weak, and while you are still alive before you die."

[21092] 6. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "If a person possesses these three qualities, then no good can be expected of them: they do not fear

Allah in private, they do not follow the religion even in their old age, and they have no shame."

# *Chapter 98*

## The Obligation to Do a Good Deed after One Commits an Evil Deed

To beautify our deeds and actions, we should couple repentance and seeking forgiveness after committing a sin with the performance of a good deed. God says in the Quran, as an incentive for the believer and to witness His incredible mercy, "Whoever brings virtue shall receive ten times its like; but whoever brings vice shall not be requited except with its like, and they will not be wronged."[66] Our good deeds get multiplied tenfold, so we should strive to adorn our transgressions with more beautiful deeds.

[21094] 8. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "One who would like to know their status with Allah should investigate what they owe Allah [rights and responsibilities]. And a person should contemplate the deeds that they are doing, for if a deed is good and beautiful, then they should continue with it. However, if they find their deed to be evil and ugly, then they should avoid it. For Allah is more worthy of one's loyalty and obedience. As for the one who does evil in secret, then let them do a good deed secretly. As for one who commits a sin in public, then they should do a good deed in public."

[21097] 4. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "How [beautiful] are good deeds after one commits the bad, and how ugly are the evil deeds after one performs the good!"

66. The Quran 6:160 (AQQ).

[21098] 5. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "Wherever you are, be conscious of Allah, and treat people with good character. If you do a bad deed, then do a good deed to erase it."

# *Chapter 99*

## The Correctness of Repentance by an Apostate

In our religious tradition, repentance holds immense importance, especially for corrupt beliefs, though at the same time, the Quran itself emphasizes Allah's mercy and forgiveness for those who repent sincerely (Quran 9:114). The path to forgiveness stays open even for the gravest transgressions, as long as repentance is sincere and accompanied by a commitment to following the right path.

[21099] 1. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "If a believer does good deeds while in the state of belief, and then becomes afflicted with unrest causing them to disbelieve only to repent after that disbelief, then Allah will record and count for them all of the good deeds that they did when they were a believer, and it will not be voided by their disbelief if they repent after their disbelief."

# *Chapter 100*

## The Obligation to Busy Oneself with Righteous Deeds over Family and Wealth

All the physical pleasures of this world are an adornment for us for a temporary, allotted period, as well as a trial and test for us, depending on how we use them. The most important of these pleasures are our wealth and children, both of which are a means to an end, but not the end, contrary to what we often understand or feel. Our deeds, our relationship with God, and the impact we make in our communities are the biggest determiners of our success in the world beyond this one.

[21100] 1. Imam Ali (p) said, "If the son of Adam is in his last day of this world and the first day of the days of the afterlife, his wealth, children, and deeds will take a physical form in front of him. He will look towards his wealth and say, 'By Allah! I was so miserly and careful with you, so what do you have for me?' He [his wealth] will say. 'Take from me your shroud.' He then will look at his children and say, 'By Allah! I was loving to you, and I was your protector. What do you have for me?' They will say, 'We will take you to your grave and place you in it.'" He said, "He then will look at his deeds and say, 'By Allah! I was not attentive to you, and you were a burden to me.' His deeds will respond, saying, 'I am your partner in your grave and on the day that you will be resurrected, until we are both displayed before your Lord.'"

[210101] 2. Imam Ali (p) said, "A Muslim has three friends. The first friend, their deeds, says, 'I am with you in life and death.' The second, their wealth, says, 'I am with you until your death.' Once they die it goes to their inheritors. The last friend, their child, says,

'I am with you until the doorway to your grave, and then I will leave your side.'"

# *Chapter 101*

## The Obligation to Be Cautious with One's Deeds as They Display to Allah, His Prophet, and the Imams

God says in the Quran, "And say, 'Go on working [*with your deeds*]: Allah will see your conduct, and His Apostle and the faithful [as well], and you will be returned to the Knower of the sensible and the Unseen, and He will inform you concerning what you used to do."[67] This verse of the Quran has often been quoted by the Prophet and Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt to demonstrate that they are witnesses of our actions, behaviors, and deeds.

[21102] 1. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The deeds of all humans, obedient and disobedient, are displayed before the Messenger (pbuh&hp) every morning. Therefore, beware. It is as Allah Almighty states, 'And say go on working with your deeds. For Allah and His Messenger will see your conduct.'" And then he was silent.

[21103] 2. Imam al-Rida (p) said, "The deeds of the obedient and the disobedient are displayed before the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp)."

[21105] 4. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "Why do you offend the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp)?" A man responded, "How do we offend him?" He said, "Do you not know that your deeds appear before him. If he sees a sin, it offends him. Therefore, do not offend the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp). Instead bring him joy."

[21107] 6. Imam al-Baqir (p) mentioned the verse, "for Allah will see

67. The Quran 9:105 (AQQ).

your deeds and His Messenger and the believers." He (p) said, "By Allah, this is in reference to Imam Ali (p)."

[21109] 8. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "The deeds of humanity, whether obedient or deviant, are placed before the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) and the Imams (pbut) daily. Therefore, be careful. That is what Allah refers to when He says, 'and say go forth with your deeds, for Allah, His Messenger and the believers will see your deeds.'"

[21110] 9. Imam al-Sadiq (p) said, "The deeds of the nation of the Messenger of Allah, whether obedient or deviant, appear before him every morning. Therefore, beware! That is what Allah Almighty means by, 'And say, "Go forth with your deeds for Allah and His Messenger and the believers will see your deeds."'"

[21112] 11. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp) said, "One who guarantees for me that they will safeguard what is between their mouth and belly and what is between their legs, then I will guarantee heaven for them."

[21117] 16. Imam Ali al-Rida (p) said, "On Monday and Thursday, deeds are displayed before Allah, His Messenger, and the Imams (pbut)."

[21123] 22. Imam al-Baqir (p) said, "There is not a believer or a disbeliever that dies except that before they are placed in their grave their deeds are placed before the Messenger of Allah (pbuh&hp), Imam Ali (p), and those after him whom Allah has made it incumbent to follow."

[21126] 25. A group of companions said to Imam al-Rida (p), "A group of your followers asked us to tell you to pray for them." He (p) said, "By Allah! I present their deeds to Allah every day."

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Human beings are composed of a physical body, an animated self or *nafs* that drives the person to accomplish their goals and meet their needs, and seek fulfillment, and a soul or *ruh*, which is the "command of God". It is in the interaction of these three components that a person either rises to the loftiest of stations, remains unchanged, or devolves towards immorality. While the life trajectory of the body, which is a physical entity that requires basic necessities and nourishment, and the soul, which is a God-given potential, is relatively straightforward, the *nafs* is fettered by the complexities of ego, desire, drive and accountability. It is here that a person's internal battle takes place, between the pull to be selfless, disciplined, and unanchored to material existence, and hunger for accumulation, corporal satisfaction, and dependence on material gain. As such, the greatest human beings channel their faith and will-power towards this struggle, and use their physical bodies and the potential ingrained within them to rise above the trivialities of life. Hence, the struggle of the *nafs* is an integral part of being a believer, and it is a life-long test that involves cognizance, introspection, self-analysis, and various other tools for one's improvement. This book provides a comprehensive list of traditions from the infallibles on *Jihad al-nafs* or the Struggle of the Self, and it serves as both a theoretical lesson and a practical manual for every wayfaring believer to implement.

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